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A Patriot's Mistake

Reminiscences of the Parnell Family

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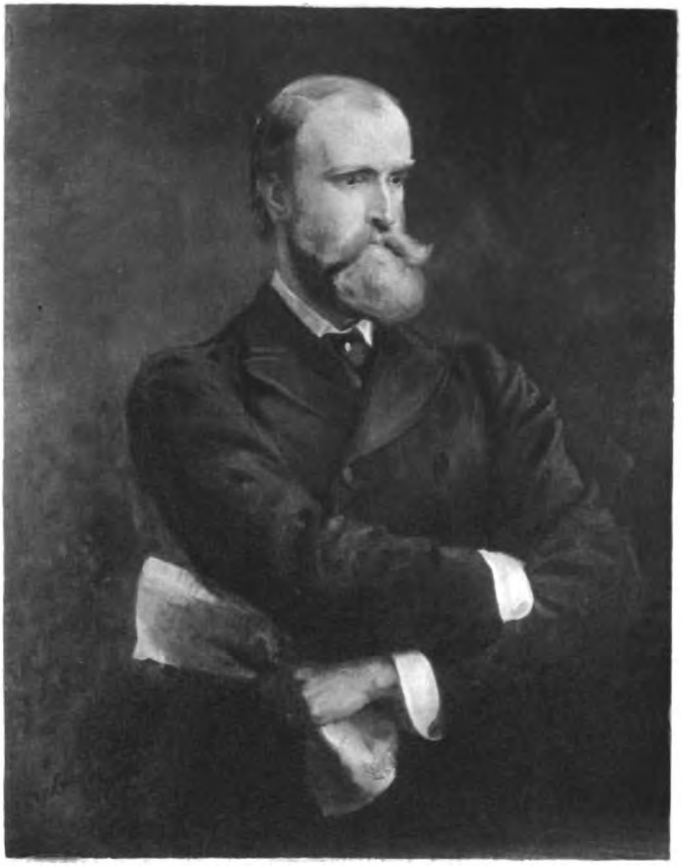

Charles Stewart Parnell.
From the painting by Sydney P. Hall
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A PATRIOT'S MISTAKE

BEING PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF THE PARNELL FAMILY. BY A DAUGHTER OF THE HOUSE

EMILY MONROE DICKINSON

WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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PREFACE

My object in writing these pages was to trace some of the principal events which would gratify the natural desire of the reading public to know something, from a personal source, of a family that had become so famous, some of whom were so tragically unfortunate in the issues of their lives. I have desired, too, to lift to some extent the veil of proud reserve that wrapt a spirit as brave and impenetrable as ever faced the fierce struggles, the stress, and shipwreck of political life.

A well-known Irish journalist has said that ours was "the most tragic family he had ever heard of." This, I think, is true; and so I present this sketch, believing that the interest attached to some of the characters will make it acceptable, and hoping, too, that a saner, truer, and more just estimate may be passed upon them.

I am indebted to my brother, Mr. John Parnell, for his interest in the book, and his help in the matter of the illustrations.

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My best thanks are also due to Sir Walter Armstrong, the Trustees of the National Gallery, Dublin, and Mr. Sydney P. Hall, for permission to reproduce the latter's portrait of my brother Charles, taken towards the close of his life.

E. M. D.

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

THE HUNT

PAGE

Morning at Avondale—Cora Parnell—Fox-hunting—The Start—The Finish—A Dinner Party—Mrs. Parnell—The Parnell Family—An Accident—Cora's Birth—Child-life at Avondale—Arthur Monroe Dickinson—Death of Hayes Parnell—An Early Attachment—Delia Parnell—Lady Howard—School at Paris—Life in London—Offers of Marriage 1

CHAPTER II

SOCIETY IN LONDON

Ball at Lord W——'s—Lady Howard—Unwelcome Advances—A Question of Social Ethics—Sir Ralph Howard—Sir William Fraser—At Court—A London Season—Lord W—— again—Death of Cora's Horse—A Bad Omen—Visit from Arthur Monroe Dickinson—A Scene—Sir Ralph complains—Death of Mr. Parnell—His Will—Cora left Penniless—Filial Grief 13

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER III

THE WEDDING

PAGE

Mrs. Parnell made Guardian of the Children—John Parnell dispossessed in Favour of Charles Stewart—A Chancery Ward's Secret Marriage—Life in Dublin—Lord Carlisle—An Offer of Adoption—Lord Chancellor Brady—Musical Ability—Interview with Mr. L—— —Marriage with Captain Monroe Dickinson—Delia's Marriage—Jealousy 33

CHAPTER IV

REMORSE

Charles Stewart Parnell at Cambridge—University Life—Boating on the Cam—Daisy—All in a Garden Fair—Love's Young Dream—A Rude Awakening—Daisy's Tragic Death—An Inquest—Frenzied Grief—Nervous Depression—Leaves Cambridge—A Nightly Apparition—Charles Hunts with the Wards—The Fenian Movement—A Police Search—The Chancery Ward's Public Marriage—Beauty and the Beast 49

CHAPTER V

CRICKET

A Paris Honeymoon—Captain Dickinson ordered to the Cape—Fanny Parnell—Charles celebrates his Accession to Independence—Cricket Match Suggested—Preparations—A House Party—Arrival of Officers—First Day's Innings—Lunch—Evening Amusement—Second Day's Cricket—Collapse of the Game—Descent to Flirtation—Love-making—Second Night's Amusement—The Widow—A Night's Revel—Break up of the Party 63

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CHAPTER VI

ROYAL

PAGE

Mrs. Parnell's Wealth—Mrs. Dickinson resumes Hunting—Purchases Royal—His Escapades—His Death at Twenty-two—Captain Dickinson—Club Life in Dublin—Birth of Delia Dickinson—Domestic Trouble—The Drinking Habit—Arthur's Struggles to Reform—Painful Scenes—Family-Help—Charles's Efforts on his Brother-in-law's Behalf—A Proposal of Separation Rejected—Charles throws Himself into Political Life 79

CHAPTER VII

Mr. L——

Afternoon Tea—A Sister's Remonstrance—Mr. L——'s Devotion—Arthur's Lapses—His Violence—His Loss of all Control—A Dangerous Moment—Coldness of Friends and Acquaintances—A Sister's Trouble—Scarlatina—Her Death—Mrs. Livingstone Thomson—Attempted Suicide—Resumes Horse-riding—Arrest of Charles Stewart Parnell 92

CHAPTER VIII

KILMAINHAM

Visit to Kilmainham Jail—Prison Life—The "Suspects"—Licence Allowed—Attempted Bribe—Death of Richard Livingstone Thomson—A Mother's Sorrow—Political Effect of the Arrests—Release—Meetings at Avondale—Reason of Charles's adopting a Political Career—Engagement with Miss Pearl H—— —Becomes Famous—About to be Married—Jilted 106

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IX

COLONEL H——

PAGE

Fanny Parnell—Her Early Death—John Parnell—Authoress meets Colonel H—— —An Absorbing Passion—The Struggle—The Temptation—An Audacious Proposal—Mr. L—— Interferes—An Accusation—Ties Severed—A Moral Drawn 120

CHAPTER X

THE BROAD PATH

After Kilmainham—A Nation's Gratitude—Forty Thousand Pounds subscribed—Rumours of Evil—Charles meets Mrs. O'Shea—Illness in London—The Snare Drawn—The Broad Road—A Return to Avondale—James the Groom—Improved Prospects 136

CHAPTER XI

SORROW

Prospects of Arthur's Return—A Fit of Depression—An Afternoon's Ride — A Sad Telegram — Stunned by Arthur's Death—The Funeral—After-effects—Nursed by Charles—Delia sent to School—Visit of Mrs. Parnell —Five Years' Solitude 149

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XII

FAITHFUL LOVE

PAGE

Mr. L——'s Devotion—Return to Dublin—Mr. L—— Proposes—He is Refused—His Death—Visit to the Channel Islands—Bad Reception in Guernsey—Return to Avondale—Delia Dickinson—A Romantic Attachment—Visit to Dublin—Changed Conditions there 162

CHAPTER XIII

DEATH

Retribution on Charles—Divorce Proceedings—Treatment by the Press—A Social and Political Storm—A Brave Stand—Monster Meetings—Effect on Charles—Dejection and Despair—His Marriage—A Fresh Storm—Repeated Defeats—Meeting at Cabinteely—An Omen—Charles's Superstition—A Wetting—Night Travel—A Cold—Death at Brighton—Effect of the News—His Funeral 175

CHAPTER XIV

JOHN

Captain and Mrs. Pagett—John Parnell's Accession to Avondale—Returns with his Mother to Avondale—Confused Affairs—Money Difficulties—A Sad Winter—Law's Delays—Delia's Marriage—Memorial Funeral—Rumours that Charles lives—Industries at Avondale—Purchase of Victor—Delia a Widow—The Rewards of Patriotism—Avondale to be Sold 191

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CHAPTER XV

A CRIME

PAGE

Mrs. Parnell at Ironsides—A Murderous Blow—Her Recovery—Anna Parnell—Mrs. Parnell returns to Ireland—Reception at Kingsbridge—Settles at Avondale——Losses in Speculation—Chair Days at Avondale . . 204

CHAPTER XVI

FIRE

A Proposed Dinner Party — Revived Hospitality — A Political Skirmish—Dancing—An Alarm of Fire—Mrs. Parnell Fatally Injured—Her Death—Her Funeral—Effect on the Authoress—Serious Illness—Brooding Grief—Medical Verdict 212

CHAPTER XVII

PEACE

A Slow Recovery — Sale of Avondale — The Auction — A Difference of Political Opinion—The Situation at Avondale Debated—The Bidding at Auction—Lord Beresford—Delia's Second Marriage—Authoress resumes Horse-riding—Purchases Prince—An American Tea—Further Money Loss — Retirement — A Sympathetic Friend—Peace at Last 227

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

CHARLES STEWART PARNELL . . . . *Frontispiece*
From the Painting by SYDNEY P. HALL *in the National Portrait Gallery of Ireland.*

CHARLES STEWART PARNELL, ÆTAT 8 . . *To face page* 8

CHARLES STEWART PARNELL, ÆTAT 20 . „ „ 50

MRS. MONROE DICKINSON ON ROYAL . „ „ 80

AVONDALE, THE HOME OF CHARLES STEWART PARNELL . . . . . „ „ 140

CHARLES STEWART PARNELL IN HIS LABORATORY . . . . . „ „ 168

MRS. PARNELL, MOTHER OF CHARLES STEWART PARNELL . . . . „ „ 212

AVONDALE, GENERAL VIEW . . . „ „ 228

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A PATRIOT'S MISTAKE

CHAPTER I

THE HUNT

"Skilled in all the craft of hunters,
Learned in all the lore of old men."
—LONGFELLOW.

ABOUT fifty years ago, on one of those balmy, spring-like mornings towards the end of February, when winter seemed for a time to have given place to summer, a party of red-coated equestrians was assembled. The scene was in what has been called the "Garden of Ireland," and at one of the prettiest demesnes in it, that belonging to my father, John Parnell, Avondale, in the county of Wicklow. The occasion for which horsemen and hounds had met together was to endeavour to run to earth a particularly obnoxious fox, who had been making too free with my father's lambs, and, in fact, had been rendering himself a very great nuisance all round. My father, the courteous Master of the Hounds, which he kept at Avondale, was mounted on a splendid

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white horse, his favourite steed, which he had had for many years. I, his little daughter Cora,[1] aged seven, sitting on a pretty, sleepy-looking pony, was by his side in a state of repressed excitement, this being my first day with hounds and my second on the back of a pony.

Whilst waiting for the start, my father utilised the time in giving me a few instructions: "Give your pony his head, Cora," he told me, "don't attempt to check him; follow me, and don't hold on to the crupper. You mustn't give yourself a bad habit to begin with."

Here the "Halloo" sounding, Master Reynard having been unearthed, the field started in hot pursuit, my father leading, and turning round in his saddle now and again, with the easy grace of a skilful and experienced rider, to throw a glance of encouragement to me, who followed closely and obeyed implicitly his injunctions from post to finish. The sleepy-looking pony had suddenly wakened up at the first sound of the horn, and displayed his mettle by proving himself a born hunter, and able to jump, not only as well as any horse in the field, but better than most. My father looked, as he felt, very proud of his daughter, and indeed my small

[1] My mother's name for me—not my real one.

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head was in considerable danger of being turned by all the compliments and flattering speeches I received on my riding, which all said promised to develop later on into horsemanship, or rather horsewomanship, of a superior order. Having been presented with the brush, I chattered happily to my father on the way home, as we rode along the road at a slow pace, it being a rule of his, unalterable as the law of the Medes and Persians, never to ride his hunters fast on hard ground.

At Avondale a roaring wood fire in the huge hall, which reached up to the roof, greeted the tired sportsmen, and imparted to the old house a look of comfort and cheer. This hall was the most distinguished feature of the house. A carved oak gallery ran across the upper end, the railing of which was hung with what were the proudest trophies of the family, relics of the bravery of their ancestors.

A dinner party had been organised for that evening, so rooms had been prepared for the guests who had been hunting, in which to exchange their scarlet coats for black. Needless to say, they found the good fires and warm water, not to mention a tumbler of hot punch with which they had been provided, most acceptable.

My mother, a beautiful and accomplished

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American, still quite a young woman, was particularly famous for her talents as hostess, and in the good old days when hospitality was extensively and generously practised, she had ample scope for the exercise of her talent in this respect. She was even more charming than usual this evening, for having been uneasy all day about me, the reaction on getting me back safe imparted a greater vivacity to her manner than it generally possessed.

Having been allowed to dine late in honour of the occasion, and being much too excited to feel tired, I was a source of great amusement to the staid and elderly squire to whose lot it had fallen to take me in to dinner. The chief event of this meal was the entrance to dessert of a dark-eyed, intelligent-looking boy of the tender age of three, my brother, Charles Stewart Parnell, destined in after years to play a prominent part on life's stage, who for the moment absorbed the general attention. When his name, coupled with mine, was proposed as a toast, the happiness of that happy day had reached a climax, so my mother, having given the customary signal for the retirement of the ladies to the drawing-room, thought her little girl had had enough excitement, and rang the bell for the nurse to take me to bed.

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I was one of a large family, which at the time this story opens consisted of six children —Delia and Hayes, both older than me, and John, Katherine, and Charles, who were younger. The eldest, Delia, was at a boarding-school in Paris, and was then about fourteen. My father was a wealthy and very handsome man, belonging to one of the best old Irish families. Soon after attaining his majority he had, whilst travelling with his cousin, Lord Powerscourt, met, fallen violently in love with, and married the lovely and only daughter of Admiral Stewart, then in command of a man-of-war, who distinguished himself brilliantly in his profession. The young bride of seventeen spent her honeymoon on the Atlantic, on her way over from America to Ireland, and the sudden transformation from having been the belle of New York to the solitudes of Avondale, appears at first to have been a great disappointment to her. My father went in for farming on an extensive scale, which, joined to his being an ardent lover of all kinds of sport, kept him very much in the open air, so that my mother, not caring for outdoor recreations, was in consequence left a good deal alone, and naturally, in contrast to the gay life she had led in America, found it dull and lonely. However, when in due course

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children began to come, she no longer complained so much of loneliness or want of occupation, though she never took kindly to the country or country pursuits.

After my successful *début* in the hunting-field, I was permitted to accompany my father on most future hunting occasions. I was an extremely delicate child, having come into the world too soon, and had been ordered to ride a great deal for my health, and as this was an exercise I was passionately fond of, the prescription accorded well with my inclination. The local doctor having given it as his opinion that I would not live to be twenty-one, my father resolved that no care on his part should be wanting to prove the man of medicine wrong, and, indeed, I have always considered that it was owing to the tender and unremitting care of my father that I did live, not only to grow up, but to a good old age. My birth was heralded by a series of catastrophes. A house party being in course of progress at Avondale, a certain Lord U——, one of the guests, whose sight was very defective, offered to treat some of the ladies to a drive on an outside car, which offer was eagerly accepted, my mother forming one of the party. All went well until on returning, Lord U——, failing to see in the

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waning light of a short winter's day, a particularly crooked tree at the gate, drove right against it, upsetting car, horse, and the whole party, himself included. My mother was thrown with her head under the horse, from which perilous position she was rescued by her husband, who had come running down from the house, distraught with anxiety, immediately on hearing of the accident. Another lady had broken her arm, a third having sustained various minor injuries, and that night, whilst the distracted doctor rushed from one sufferer to another, I was ushered into this vale of tears.

The five years succeeding my introduction to the hounds passed uneventfully for me. I spent the time chiefly on a pony's back as my father's companion. Returning from a day's hunting at his usual walking pace, he would lessen the tedium of it by imparting to me some of his own rare knowledge regarding horses. This gave me much useful information and practical instruction which afterwards—when the time came that I was obliged to keep my horses without any help, except that afforded by a groom—was a great aid to me. I never forgot those early lessons, but treasured them up, and it was partly due to this early and good training that I had a record of fifty years' almost uninterrupted success

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and satisfaction with horses, such as is seldom the portion of any one who has gone through the multitudinous vexations and disappointments that horse-flesh is heir to. One of the maxims my father impressed on me was, "Never to leave to the groom anything I could do myself." No doubt my observance of this was one reason why my horses were seldom or never "laid up," even with a cold, or unable for their work, except from an accident—and even accidents were of rare occurrence.

On wet days we children would play together in the big hall, which was capacious enough to drive a coach and four round. In a large family the different members often divide in twos and twos, each one having his own special "chum." Thus Hayes and I were chums, John and Katherine, whilst the latest arrival, baby Fanny, fell to the share of Charles, who from an early age exhibited a masterful propensity for dictating to and managing others, assuming the leadership and trying to set the world and its pilgrims right. In order to get his own way with his brothers and sisters he would "butt" us all round with his head, like a goat, so that he acquired the name amongst us of "Butt-head." His high spirits, which would not brook control, proved a source of great trouble to his nurses, and later

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Charles Stewart Parnell
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on to his governesses and tutors, who, one and all, found themselves incapable of managing him, though a word of tender remonstrance from his mother would appeal at once to his affectionate disposition, and curb his most turbulent outbreaks of passionate temper.

At twelve years of age I first met Arthur Monroe Dickinson, whose people resided near Avondale, for whom I formed a childish attachment. A year later my brother Hayes, just sixteen, met with an accident in the hunting-field, from the effects of which he afterwards died. From this calamity my father never fully recovered, and not caring to hunt again he sold the hounds.

My mother had always dreaded these hunting-days for her children, predicting that some day one of them would be brought back dead; but her husband had invariably ridiculed her fears, maintaining that there could be no danger for his children, as they were all born riders. He forgot that as many, if not more, accidents are caused from the bad riding of others as from bad riding on the part of the individuals themselves; and this happened in the case of my brother Hayes, whose death was caused by the clumsy horsemanship of another rider behind him—Captain Ormsby—who, in allowing his horse to "rush" a double ditch, simply "rode over" him.

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My mother in later years had taken to residing a great deal in Paris with her mother and brother, the former having refused to live any longer with Admiral Stewart, for domestic reasons. Meanwhile several other children had been born in our family. The attachment between Arthur and me continued to progress without interference, so that by the time we had attained the respective ages of fifteen and twenty, we were mutually very much in love, and became privately engaged. Arthur had been for some years in the army. He was a fine, manly young fellow, but possessed no means excepting his pay; so he and I agreed to wait for one another, and to keep our engagement to ourselves until Arthur, now a lieutenant, should get his promotion, and be in a position to ask for me openly from my father. Meanwhile we were able to meet but rarely, Arthur's regiment being quartered in England, where his military duties demanded his presence.

The following winter my eldest sister went to stay with her aunt, Lady Howard, for her first London season. Delia Parnell was considered very beautiful. She was of medium height, with perfectly modelled figure, like a Venus. Her hair, soft, and very abundant, of dusky black, contrasted with her ivory skin. When relieved

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by a light flush she looked radiant. Her features were of the Grecian cast, and her eyes were soft and dark, with melancholy depths in them. She looked forward to a great success in London, and to making a good marriage.

My father took me to Paris in order that my education should be finished at the same boarding-school which my sister had recently left. This was a large one, consisting of a hundred girls of different nationalities—English, Irish, American, French, German, Greek, Italian, Jewish, and Armenian. I worked hard, and was specially distinguished for my dancing and music. My sister, Delia, meanwhile was enjoying all the success, and even far more than she had anticipated, in London, where her dark style of beauty, set off to the utmost by her great natural taste in dress, created quite a sensation. After reigning as one of the greatest beauties of the day for three successive seasons, she accepted the proposal of a Mr. Livingstone Thomson, a millionaire, an American of good birth, who had been brought up in Paris. When her marriage should have been celebrated it was decided that I should take her place at Lady Howard's, to be presented and launched into society, so that I, in my turn, might make a matrimonial choice. Since pledging myself to

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wait for Arthur, I had had a couple of offers, both good from a worldly point of view, but true to my boy lover, I unhesitatingly refused both.

Arthur and I had now been secretly engaged for three years, during which period we had corresponded regularly, but had seldom met. However, absence had only made our love grow fonder, as will be seen in the course of this narrative.

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CHAPTER II

SOCIETY IN LONDON

"Alas! that Spring should vanish with the rose!
That Youth's sweet-scented manuscript should close.
The nightingale, that in the branches sang,
Ah! where, and whither flown again, who knows?"
—OMAR KHAYYAM.

A LARGE crowd was collected, on a warm night in April, in front of the superb mansion of Lord W—— in Park Lane to watch the entrance of the privileged few hundreds invited to the ball of the season. Tired chaperons, very much rouged and done up, adorned with sparkling diamonds and in gorgeous attire, and fresh young girls daintily dressed in white, palpitating with excitement, and full of joyous anticipation, stepped on the crimson cloth laid down for the protection of white satin slippers, and joined in the general *mêlée* on the wide staircase. At the top of this Lord W—— stood receiving his guests, as they slowly and laboriously pushed their way up.

Lady Howard and I, her *débutante*, were amongst the latest arrivals. Having shaken

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hands with her host, my aunt introduced me —one who had not long left Paris after a residence of three years there.

"So you are a sister of the famous beauty!" was Lord W——'s first observation.

"Yes," I replied, "I am not the rose, but I am the next best thing, I am related to the rose."

"Not so sure of that," Lord W—— answered, laughing, "I mean about your not being the rose. However, that is a matter of opinion." His attention being here claimed by fresh arrivals, who had triumphantly surmounted the difficulties of the staircase, my chaperon and I passed on into the crowded dancing-room, where Lady Howard was presently besieged with numerous applications for an introduction to the sister of the late popular belle, and I was soon busy writing down the names of my would-be partners.

A valse striking up, I was whirled away in the arms of an officer, who discoursed on the attractions of my eldest sister. The following set of lancers I danced with an elderly baronet, who likewise discoursed on the same theme. After another valse and quadrille—Lord W—— having danced the latter, being at length relieved from his post at the head of the stairs—just as a spirited valse again commenced, made his way over to me.

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"I hope it is not too late, Miss Parnell, to ask for a dance, and trust you have been charitable enough to keep one for a poor devil who was much too handicapped to look out in time for himself," scanning my card as he spoke. Observing the next few dances were all engaged, and knowing that Lady Howard never stayed long, he coolly wrote his own name on the top of the one belonging to the prior claimant for the dance about to begin, and heedless of my remonstrances or the scowling visage of a gentleman bearing down upon us, he put his arm round my waist, and hurled me off in the giddy throng.

Lord W——, at this time, was about forty years of age. To me, a girl of eighteen, he seemed quite old. He was regarded as the greatest catch of the season, and many a manœuvring mother had tried in vain to secure him for her daughter. A fine-looking man, though not exactly handsome, he was also a desperate flirt. Having strict ideas respecting the conduct of "an engaged" young lady, which I considered could not be too dignified, I resented his free and easy manners and his attempts at familiarities, especially on so short an acquaintance. Snubbing on the part of the fair sex being such a novelty to a man in Lord W——'s position naturally, instead of repulsing, only attracted him all the

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more, and his attentions to the fresh object of his admiration grew more marked as the night went on. Notwithstanding Lord W——'s unwelcome advances, or rather perhaps because of them, for, of course, so much notice from my host procured me plenty from others, I thoroughly enjoyed my ball, which was a magnificent scene of light, gaiety, and animation. I eagerly discussed the events of the evening with my aunt, whilst driving home in the carriage. Lady Howard was surprised as well as pleased by her *débutante's* success, for as she did not consider me even pretty, and coming immediately after my beautiful sister, she had not expected such a triumph.

"But I don't like Lord W——, Aunt Mary," I informed her, "he was quite insulting, squeezing my hand and waist, and once, on finding himself alone with me on the balcony, he actually tried to kiss me!"

Lady Howard laughed. "Oh! little Cora," she replied, patting me on the back, "men are all like that."

"I think it is disgusting," I retorted; "I don't mean to allow them to insult me, whatever others may do; but I won't let the unpleasant remembrance spoil my evening, which otherwise was lovely."

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Other balls succeeded this one. Between riding with my uncle, Sir Ralph Howard, in the park in the mornings, driving, returning cards, or putting in an appearance at some *al fresco* entertainment in the country in the afternoons with my aunt, and attending two or often three balls at night, I was kept fully occupied in the pursuit of pleasure. My uncle had paid a high price for a very handsome young black horse, which he had bought for me to ride in the park with him, and had also presented me with a new riding-habit, made by the best London tailor.

One morning soon after my arrival in London, as my uncle and I were taking our ride, we were joined by Sir William Fraser, Lady Howard's eldest son and stepson to Sir Ralph, also on horseback, riding a beautiful bay. Sir Ralph introduced him to me, and he and I forthwith got deeply into the subject of horses, a most congenial topic to both. Sir William was one of those rare individuals called "woman-haters." Stepping on to forty, he had never been known to take any notice of ladies, and entertained an especial aversion to girls in the bread-and-butter stage. He was rich, and possessed a nice house in London, where he lived *en garçon*, and had some of the best horses procurable for money in his stables. I had often heard my sister mention him as having

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systematically avoided her whilst stopping with his mother, and was prepared for similar treatment with respect to myself. It rather surprised me, therefore, when instead he continued to ride with me and his stepfather, and appeared to enjoy discussing the (to him) all-important subject of horse-flesh, of which he possessed considerable knowledge. A couple of days after the first meeting I met him again at a dinner party at Lady Howard's. On the gentlemen joining the ladies in the drawing-room after dinner, Sir William sought me out, and to the intense astonishment of his mother and all present, remained talking by my side during the remainder of his stay.

He asked me several questions. "How I liked London?" "If I had been to many balls," and "Whether I was going to be presented at the approaching drawing-room." Finally, he asked, "Who dressed me."

"My maid," I answered wonderingly, not understanding.

"Oh! I mean, does my mother or your father pay for your dresses?"

"Of course, my father does; but in point of fact, nobody has to pay for my dresses as I wear my sister's old ones, which she left here, and which have been altered for me. Even this dress

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I have on now," indicating a pretty white frock I wore, "is an old one of Delia's."

Sir William laughed. "Well, you look very nice in it, whatever it is; but it's not every young lady who would confess to wearing her sister's old clothes, or be satisfied to do so." Then he added, "And is the perfect-fitting riding-habit you had on the other day, which made you look so fetching, also an old garment of your sister Delia's?"

"Oh, no! Uncle Ralph gave me that habit. He wrote to my father before I came, stipulating that whatever I wore, I mustn't wear any old riding-habits, as he wanted me to do him credit in the park on horseback."

"Which you certainly do, and in my opinion you look better in the saddle than Delia; but it's a pity my respected stepfather isn't as careful of his own appearance as he is of that of his niece and his groom." Here be it stated in explanation, that Sir Ralph Howard always selected the oldest and most shabby clothes he possessed for riding gear, and carried a big cotton umbrella under one arm, which accentuated the odd look of his attire. He always rode the handsomest horse he could procure, for he was not exempt from the family trait of love for, and knowledge of, horse-flesh. Its accoutrements were faultless, and

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he took care that his groom should be, not only as well mounted as himself, but also that he should always be as smartly turned out as possible. This evidence of eccentricity on his part was of such note, that he was once caricatured by *Punch*, riding in clothes ragged and torn on a splendid horse, carrying his cotton umbrella, with a groom behind, likewise on a magnificent horse, but exceedingly well dressed, and minus the umbrella. Another incident related of him is, that soon after his marriage with Lady Fraser, he did not, at the first ball she gave as Lady Howard, know his own guests. Neither was he known to them, for being a man of reserved and quiet habits, and having a distaste for society, he had never mixed much in social functions, and did not do so even with his wife. On being told by Lady Howard to take the Duchess of Kent, whom she pointed out to him, into supper, he walked up to her Grace and offered his arm.

"Sir!" exclaimed the indignant lady, drawing herself up and surveying Sir Ralph through her eye-glass all over, "*who are you?*"

"Your host, madame, Sir Ralph Howard," replied Sir Ralph, bowing.

"Oh!" was the exclamation of the disconcerted Duchess, who, with a gracious smile at once accepted the proffered arm.

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But to return to our subject. After some further conversation, Sir William made his adieux to the company in general, and to his mother in particular, to whom, *en passant*, he observed, "A jolly little girl that, mother, in the white muslin dress, which, she tells me, is an old rag of Delia's; plenty of go in her; to my taste preferable to any of your society beauties."

Lady Howard, feeling slightly bewildered, and as if nothing would ever surprise her again, at this remark of her misogynist son, requested me to play something. I immediately complied, and seated myself at the piano. I was a very good instrumental performer, but had not yet attained the height of my abilities as a musician. Later on, some said that my execution and expression did not fall short of the great Thalberg, and that, next to himself, nobody else had ever been able to play the music of this celebrated composer so well.

In a few days the drawing-room came off, and I made my curtsey to the Queen. I found the function insufferably dull and tedious, but acquitted myself to my aunt's satisfaction. Of course, as a *débutante* my dress was entirely white, simple and suitable to my years, but as one white dress is so like another, it can be left to the imagination of the reader. Lady

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Howard was one blaze of diamonds, was becomingly rouged, and wore a handsome gown of cream lace over crimson satin, and a crimson satin train trimmed with cream, and white, and yellow flowers.

The ball that followed was the crowning event of that season, and had been eagerly anticipated by me and other *débutantes* of the year, as well as by many in the political world for less girlish reasons. It was hoped that a certain great statesman,[1] then nearing the close of his brilliant public career, would appear at it, and that from his reception by royalty, an inkling might be gained of the probable duration of his administration. The consequent crowded attendance and subdued buzz of excitement lent life and colour to a function otherwise somewhat stately and cold. It was a brilliant panorama of colour. The white marble columns of the magnificent palace rooms formed a background for some of the most beautiful floral decorations seen that season, among which, like brighter flowers, the lovely dresses and diamonds of the guests, contrasting with the varied uniforms, glimmered and shone. My reputation for truthfulness would have suffered had I told Sir William Fraser that the dress in which I

[1] Lord Palmerston.

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appeared that evening was one of my sister's old ones. I was and looked supremely happy, having been presented by Lady Howard with a beautiful gown fresh from Worth's, in which I was flatteringly told I looked like a young queen.

At this time I was very slight, and rather delicate in appearance. My face had not any striking regularity of features or style of beauty, but it had life and brightness and magnetism in it, was thought uncommon, and one of those which for many men have much attraction. Whatever may have been the disappointment felt in the petticoat world as the result of my ball, I felt nothing but the greatest delight, being at the age when the cup of pleasure has not lost its sparkling foam. Many were the wondering and half-envious looks which I received from those who had been through the mill-round of four or five seasons, and had almost forgotten their first enthusiasm for court functions.

Like all my family, I had that keen enjoyment of life and artistic appreciation of form and colour which goes with the Celtic blood, though some of my charm came from my American mother. My freshness and youth, set off with the Paris gown and the *joie de vie*

W.H.S.

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which I always possessed, attracted a good deal of attention, and won more than a passing smile from the royal personages present. I was more at home on horseback and in the open air than in London crushes, and even in my first season often thought with regret of my Irish riding lessons with my father and the old hunting pony. It was to this that my grace as a dancer was due, and my card was in great request, Lord W—— and Sir William Fraser vying with one another in their homage.

The latter, leaning against a pillar, had been rather morosely regarding me as I spun past with Lord W—— to the strains of a popular valse. He had become fond of his *naïve* little cousin, and it hurt him to witness the insolent, impassioned glances of a satiated *roué* bestowed on an ignorant child of nature, for as such he considered me.

At the conclusion of the dance he approached, and with scant ceremony held out his arm to take me away from my present partner, but Lord W——, with temper, protested that Miss Parnell was engaged to him for the next.

I glanced at Sir William, and meeting his serious true eyes fixed on me with a wistful expression, immediately asserted I was tired and would dance no more that night, so

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releasing myself from Lord W—— I took my cousin's arm and allowed him to lead me off in triumph.

"Cousin mine," said Sir William, "do you know you are responsible for much in bringing an elderly bachelor like me to a scene such as this?"

"How so, William?" I asked.

We were now great friends.

"Why, because I never go to balls, and had firmly resolved I wouldn't come to this, but sitting comfortably before the fire in my arm-chair, a provoking, piquant, dear little face obtruded itself before my mental vision, beckoning me with a tiny finger to come and see how peacock, otherwise court, plumage became her, so here I am. By Jove! you look too stunning for mortal man to resist."

I laughed. "Oh, William, it was good of you to take me away from Lord W——. I do detest him so, but Aunt Mary would be cross if I wasn't civil to him."

"Poor child. You have a hard time of it; but never mind, trust to me, and I will make your lot smoother if I can."

This was the last occasion on which I was destined to meet my cousin, as after events caused our paths in life to diverge; but I

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always remembered him with warm feelings of cousinly affection, and of gratitude for his championship.

The guests did not separate till very late, the ball being the closing one of the season, and most of them woke up the next morning with a sigh of relief to think of rest and change and the free air of the moor or sea.

Just now a great piece of bad luck befell me, an ill omen, the superstitious would say, of the far heavier trouble that was to follow. On entering the stable one morning the groom found the beautiful black horse I rode, for which my uncle had given such a big price, dead. Mystery enveloped his death, as there was nothing whatever to explain it. I had ridden him the previous day, and the animal had never been in better health or spirits, or more fit. However, the events which followed, bringing sorrow thick and fast in their train, soon obliterated the remembrance of the lesser evil; but I must not anticipate.

Arthur's regiment having recently been moved to Aldershot, he wrote to me appointing a day and hour to visit me, so calling one morning at Lady Howard's house in Belgrave Square, he asked for Miss Parnell, and was informed by the big powdered flunkey, with irreproachable calves, at the door, that "by her

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ladyship's orders no gentlemen were to be admitted to see Miss Parnell."[1]

"Indeed! Well, I intend to be an exception," said Arthur, determined that nothing should stand in the way of his seeing his lady-love. The man, in obedience to his instructions, tried to arrest his progress towards the staircase, but Arthur's strong arm, shooting out, thrust him against the wall. Another equally big powdered flunkey, with calves to match, standing in the background, at this crisis thought it best to come to his comrade's assistance, but Arthur's other arm quickly disposed of him also, so as no further barrier existed he ascended the staircase, and finding his little sweetheart, who had been listening in fear and trepidation to the altercation in the hall, awaiting him at the top of the first flight, walked after me into the drawing-room.

In five minutes, much to our consternation, Lady Howard sailed in, accompanied by Sir Ralph. After half-an-hour's constrained conversation the latter went away, and Arthur and I had barely time to make an appointment to meet in the square the next day at twelve o'clock when the door opened, and one of the big flunkeys, who had not yet recovered the

[1] In these days young girls were very strictly chaperoned.

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unceremonious treatment he had received, entered, and announced in stentorian tones, blended with an air of ill-concealed satisfaction, that "Sir Ralph Howard desired to speak to Miss Parnell in the study!"

Divining thereupon I was "in" for it, and hastily wishing Arthur "good-bye," the powdered footman waiting to have the pleasure of showing him out, I descended with quaking heart but dauntless mien.

"Cora, who is that gentleman?" demanded Sir Ralph in stern tones and with a sterner face.

"A Mr. Dickinson. I have known him since a child," was my reply.

"Is your father acquainted with him?"

"Yes."

"Hum! I will write to your father. That is all I have to say at present."

I felt myself dismissed and in disgrace.

The next day I met Arthur according to appointment in the square. Now I had no horse to ride, so I was in the habit of walking alone every morning about twelve o'clock. After taking a turn, Arthur and I sat down on a seat in the arbour, and just as Arthur, encircling me with his arm, was taking the kisses which absence had long denied him, Lady Howard glided by.

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She passed us with a sweeping bow, and walked on without a word.

"She is angry; go after her," advised Arthur, and I went, overtaking her on the doorstep. In my flurry I had locked Arthur into the square, which at the time was deserted, except by himself, but this did not occur to me at the moment.

"Aunt Mary, I am very sorry," I began.

"I *hope* you are, and am more surprised than I can say that a daughter of John Parnell's could be capable of such conduct!"

"But we are engaged, though nobody knows it," I explained, to account for the kissing.

"The fact of your having formed an engagement without the knowledge of your family only makes your behaviour worse. Besides, being engaged is no excuse for allowing a man to kiss you. Your friend, Adelaide L——," alluding to one of the beauties of the season, "would, I am sure, rather cut off her right hand than permit Colonel S—— to take such a liberty, although she is engaged to be married to him." In after years this same Adelaide L—— was divorced from her husband, Colonel S——, for permitting too much familiarity on the part of another man.

I felt inclined to retort that my aunt had not seen any harm in Lord W——'s attempted familiarities, though possessing no right what-

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ever, but desisted. Lady Howard and I had meanwhile been taking a turn up a side street. After a lengthened lecture on the part of the former, to which I listened in silence, we returned to the house on fairly friendly terms. On reaching my room it suddenly occurred to me that Arthur had been locked in ever since, so in consternation I hastened back to the square to unlock the gate, in ignorance that Lady Howard was watching me from the window.

My aunt afterwards made the most of this as a proof that my professions of repentance were not to be relied on, and it helped to augment the storm which presently descended on my head, under which even my intrepid spirit threatened to quail. Sir Ralph wrote relating with exaggeration the whole episode to my father, stating that I was too wild, and that he could not undertake the responsibility which the care of such a reckless girl would entail.

My father happened to be ill at the time, and with the exaggerated imagination of illness, the affair assumed distorted and gigantic proportions in his mind. Leaving his bed in order to fulfil a long-standing engagement to play in a big international cricket match, in direct disobedience to his doctor's orders, who told him if he did so it would surely cost him his life, he went straight

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from the cricket match to his solicitor's in order to make his will, by which act it would seem he had a prevision that the verdict of the doctor would prove right. After a short illness, every one was startled by news of his death, and Sir Ralph was summoned over to Dublin to attend to the arrangements of his nephew's funeral. My mother also hurried over, on receiving a telegram, from Paris, having been joined in London by me.

On my father's will being read it was found that, in consequence of his anger at my having made an engagement unknown to him, he had omitted the name of his favourite daughter, who was therefore at the start of life left penniless. This, however, did not concern me much then, for having been very fond of my father, I was too much stunned by his death, especially under the unhappy circumstances, to have any feeling except the acutest sorrow for a dearly loved father, who had ever been good and kind to me. Indeed, if anything, he had erred in being only too fond of his children.

This was my first real trouble, and one not easy "to get over," as the saying is. In a nature like mine keenly felt emotions were liable to take a deep root, and it was many years before my grief for my father was even

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partially assuaged. I felt it so much the first year that my mother, finding all her efforts to rouse me powerless, and becoming alarmed, insisted on consulting a doctor, who prescribed "distraction," it being his opinion that if I continued to dwell so constantly on one subject my reason would be endangered. Time, however, the great physician, came to my aid, as it invariably does sooner or later, in spite of our want of faith and belief in it. Though we pass through sorrow and tribulation, these cannot last for ever; and however poignant our grief may be at first, or even for long after, it must eventually pale as the years go by, for it has been ordained by a wisdom greater than man's that grief in its most acute stage cannot be of long duration, but must in due course be replaced by a milder form of sorrow called "resignation."

Well for us it is so, as otherwise we could scarce go on living, and certainly could never again feel any enjoyment of life. Let us be thankful that most of us possess a fund of elasticity which enables us in time to overcome, to a certain extent, the most overwhelming and crushing strokes of fate.

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CHAPTER III

THE WEDDING

"Oh, there's nothing half so sweet in life
As love's young dream."

—MOORE.

AFTER my father's death his children and his property were put into Chancery. In his will he had appointed Sir Ralph Howard guardian of both, but Sir Ralph declining to act as "guardian of the persons," the Court selected my mother for that office, and it was settled that a liberal allowance should be paid to her for the expenses of living, education, &c.

The first winter following the sad occurrence was passed quietly by the family at Avondale, which in the spring, by order of the Court, was let pending the majority of my brother Charles. It may be as well to mention here that in his testamentary disposition my father had passed over his eldest son John, for no explicit reason, in favour of his younger son Charles, to whom he had left the principal family estate, Avondale, John inheriting merely the portion of a younger son. Both John and Charles were very young

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when their father died, and the former had never offended him in any way, so nobody could understand the reason of this apparent act of injustice. Certain it is, however, that my father's will, and Charles's consequent accession and heritage as the eldest son, never brought him any blessing, but quite the contrary. It might have been better for him if he had remained in the position of a younger son, instead of having been given the place which belonged by moral right to his elder brother. An unjust will never brings a blessing to the one who profits by it.

My mother, in obedience to the Lord Chancellor's commands, took a house at the seaside. She would have liked to take her children away to London or Paris, but was prohibited by the Court from taking them out of Ireland. We had masters, and a resident tutor and a German governess. There my mother made an acquaintance of one who ingratiated himself into her favour by helping her, as a friend, in her law business and other matters. My sister and I were thus thrown a good deal in his way. She was now about fifteen and very lovely, but of a totally different style of beauty to her sister, Delia Livingstone Thomson. She was exceedingly fair, with an abundance of golden hair, which hung like an aureole around her. Her figure was tall and

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willowy. She had large and dark blue eyes, the typical Irish eyes, straight features, and a complexion with the delicate pink often seen on the inside of sea shells, forming altogether a bewildering picture that was hardly of the earth. Mother's friend, who excelled in sharpness and cleverness, was an adept in flirting, and his audacity in this respect, I thought, fully equalled, or even surpassed, if that were possible, Lord W——'s. He first directed his attention towards me, which culminated in an offer of marriage, although he knew I considered myself engaged. When rejected by me, he transferred his homage and affections to my sister, with whom he made such good use of his opportunities and influence, that on her attaining the age of sixteen he persuaded her to elope with him, without the knowledge of her mother, who was ill at the time, or that of her family, even running the risk of the Lord Chancellor's anger. They were married in Scotland, according to the Scotch fashion, after which my sister returned to her family, she and her husband having decided on keeping their marriage secret until the former should come of age, and be discharged as a ward of Court.

Meanwhile, sufficient time having elapsed since my father's death, my mother was ordered by the Court to take a house in Dublin, so that

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her elder daughters might have the advantages of a Dublin season. Lord Carlisle was then Lord-Lieutenant, and an old friend of my mother's. Now, taking advantage of such an excellent opportunity of renewing his former friendship, he "took her under his wing" and secured to her and her daughters introductions to the best houses and families which Dublin society afforded, so that my mother's first entrance into the social atmosphere of Dublin took place under the most favourable auspices. Lord Carlisle directed that invitations should be sent to her to all his own entertainments, either public or private, including the dinner parties, on which occasions he showed her every personal attention, and at balls introduced partners himself to my sister and me. He also insisted that the names of my mother and her two daughters should be amongst those on the list submitted to him for every private party at which he intended to be present. My sister, her secret still kept, had admirers innumerable, and took very kindly to all the adulation and admiration showered upon her. She and I now led a very gay life, running the giddy round of vain delights, and living in a world made up of drives and rides, dinners, kettle-drums, balls, concerts and theatres, fashionable talk, and everything else that was

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light and sparkling. I did not enjoy it; on the contrary, the festive scenes I was compelled to attend jarred and grated on my mood, and I would fain have kept aloof from them altogether, but was not allowed to do so. Notwithstanding my indifference and distant manner, I had some admirers, and one, a barrister, Mr. L——, fell deeply in love with me, but more of him hereafter. I was quite content to leave the palm of admiration to my lovely sister, of whom I was very fond, and who, in her turn, almost idolised me.

In consequence of the omission of my name in my father's will, I could not have been made a ward of Chancery, having no money, without a certain sum being deposited in Court, so an uncle of mine, Mr. Wigram, belonging to the sect of the Plymouth Brethren, on hearing that Admiral Stewart, who had retired on full pay, had offered to give his grand-daughter a home, determined I should not be allowed to live in such a questionable atmosphere, as he rightly considered a residence under his roof could not fail to be. He therefore paid down the necessary amount required to make me a ward of Court, as he knew very well the Lord Chancellor would not permit me to go to live in America.

Mr. Wigram himself, a little later on, offered to

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adopt me, and to settle by deed five hundred a year on me for life, which offer was formally laid before the Court, the only condition being that I should live with him and my aunt, his wife, instead of with my mother. This offer, in the interests of his penniless ward, the Lord Chancellor felt bound to consider, and finally he decided that the decision should be left to myself, who, he said, was not to be influenced by any one. I, however, knew my mother was very much troubled by the possibility of losing me. A day was settled for me to announce my decision in Court, but, having previously made up my mind, I felt no nervousness or perplexity when the decisive moment arrived. Lord Chancellor Brady, a nice kind old man, whom even the imposing grandeur of the law could not make stern, took me into a small private room, and asked me to choose between my mother on one part and my uncle and five hundred a year for life on the other. I replied I would not leave my mother. "God bless you, my child," said the old Lord Chancellor, putting his hand in fatherly benediction on my head. In later years these words often came back to my remembrance. The Lord Chancellor having heard of the youthful engagement, had from the first issued a decided veto against any

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communication whatever between the lovers. I was too much afraid of getting my mother, being our guardian, into trouble, to attempt to infringe this edict; so for three years succeeding my father's death Arthur and I did not meet once, or even correspond. On coming of age I was dismissed as a ward of Chancery. Lady Howard then sent me a pressing invitation to spend another season in London with her, but I positively refused to do so, the remembrance of the previous one with its tragic ending being still too painful, so my sister went instead.

Soon after, Arthur's regiment was quartered in Dublin. My mother withdrew all opposition, and laid no further restriction on our meeting, and the engagement was publicly given out, so Arthur became a constant visitor. His regiment was renowned for its entertainments, which were conducted on the most elaborate and expensive scale. The next two years, between almost daily intercourse at home, frequent meetings in society and at balls, on which occasions Arthur always stood waiting with a lovely bouquet ready to present to his *fiancée*, and riding parties, passed happily. Arthur was very popular with his brother officers and a great favourite with his colonel. He was considered the strongest man in the British army, was fair and good-looking, sang well, and was a

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general pet with the ladies; but though he did his share of flirting, as what young man worth his salt, made much of by the fair sex, would not? he never for a single moment swerved in his devotion to, and love for, his betrothed. I always knew this, and that however much he might like to amuse himself with others, his heart was mine, and mine alone.

I had some time since reached the zenith of my fame as a pianist, and was frequently asked to play at the large concerts organised for charitable purposes. My audience often consisted of a couple of thousand people. I always played without music. A curious proof that my soul was in my art was that before any great performance I often dreamt how execution and expression should be rendered. I would then play it in exact accordance with my dream, and on these occasions I simply surpassed myself. Like Thalberg, whose music I chiefly played, and which suited my style, I also excelled in the pathetic softness with which I played the passages that called for expression. These often drew tears from the eyes of my hearers.

After his regiment had been quartered in Ireland for two years, Arthur got his promotion, and being now in command of a company, he pressed me to name the day for our marriage.

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The 30th April was settled for the celebration of the long-delayed event, which was to take place in Dublin. My mother purchased for me a very nice trousseau, and invited a large number of guests to the wedding breakfast. It was the evening before, and all were resting after the fatigues of the day. My sister was at the piano, playing softly one of Beethoven's minor symphonies. I stood by the open window, dreamily watching the shadows deepening against the ruddy glow of the sky, while my mother was dividing her attention between a piece of embroidery and thoughts of her own youth, when a servant entered with a card for me. I took it, and was awakened from my abstraction by the name of Mr. L——. Half angry, and yet puzzled, I looked at my mother to know what I should do. The servant's entrance had passed unnoticed by my sister, so the music still went on, and the fair head at the piano did not turn. My mother signed to me to go and see him, and I, remembering his favourite haunt, went into the garden at the back, and found him amongst the roses, which were now budding. In my long white dress, coming down the path, I saw the tall figure standing, half awkwardly, yet with a new touch of dignity and manli-

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ness, and greeted him with quiet friendliness. "You must forgive me, Cora, for bothering you just now," he said, as we turned to pace the path together. "I am not going to indulge in any high heroics, and I do not grudge Captain Monroe Dickinson his good fortune, though it is rather a wrench to give up the hope of winning you. I had a fancy to see you once more before to-morrow, as it is then good-bye."

"How strange men are. I did not think you had so much sentiment, but why should the fact of my marrying prevent us from being friends? Love and marriage are intended to widen our sympathies and deepen our friendships. You seem to think I am going to be put in a box, and Arthur will have the key."

Mr. L—— laughed almost in spite of himself. "I do not think it would be easy to keep the lid down, but marriage always makes a difference, especially with girls. Anyway, I want you to promise that you will always regard me as a friend, and come to me if wanting any advice, or in any difficulty. You know I am much older than Captain Dickinson, and have more experience of the world."

I readily promised. I had always felt really grateful to Mr. L—— for his devotion to me,

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and had regarded him as my best friend. He was my ideal of a modern Bayard, *sans peur et sans reproche*, who lived as straight as he rode.

After a few more turns up and down the gravelled walk, talking about my future and Arthur's plans, I asked him to come to the drawing-room to see my mother and sister, as they were alone. He, however, declined, saying his horse was waiting.

When the hall door was reached, Mr. L—— again reminded me of the promise I had given. "I am not likely to forget it," I replied, "nor all your other kindness to me. Good-bye, dear Mr. L——, I hope you will have all the happiness you deserve." Mr. L——, unable to find words, clasped my hand and suddenly put it to his lips. I was rather surprised, and must have looked it, as I knew his undemonstrative nature, and that he never yielded to emotions. Seeing this he lightly quoted Juliet's line about parting, and vaulting into his saddle, trotted down the street. Listening to his horse's hoofs, with a slight shadow over the brightness of my mood, I walked slowly up to the drawing-room, where I found lights, and the conversation soon turned on the events of to-morrow.

We will not emulate a famous novelist in

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devoting long pages to a description of my trousseau. It was lovely and in perfect taste, with a beautiful sprinkling of my favourite colour in gowns and hats.

Every one said I made a charming bride. My white satin dress, made in the fashion of that day, looked more picturesque than our present-day style, which too often in aiming at "chic" smartness loses artistic grace. Its soft flowing folds hung round my figure, and the train was carried by two cherub-like boys, though at the *déjeûner* they gave ample proof that their nature was anything but angelic. Arthur looked very handsome and happy, but, like all men at their wedding, seemed to be making desperate efforts to appear quite at his ease, and as if he went through the same ordeal every day in the year.

For the rest, it was much like other weddings. There was the usual air of joyous relief and restored animation when the ceremony was over, and the usual vigorous signs of goodwill from the guests and the attendant cherubs, with a very unusual display of largesse on the pavement, flung by Arthur in acknowledgment of the street-boys' cheering. Then came the *déjeûner* with all the inspiration that makes wit flow and happy laughter ring.

The wedding presents were laid out on a long

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table in the library, and proved the popularity of both bride and bridegroom. Not only friends, but all the servants and workpeople at Avondale seemed to be anxious to vie with one another in sending tokens of their goodwill, for a love match always finds favour, and Arthur's genial courtesy had made us popular everywhere. The crowning gift, however, was a superb necklace and bracelet of diamonds, the present of Charles, who had given me away. He had also made me a liberal marriage settlement on his estate in lieu of the loss I had sustained by having been omitted in my father's will.

I shall now leave the bride and bridegroom to themselves for a while, in the enjoyment of their mutual love and long-tried affection, which had triumphed over and stood firm against the innumerable obstacles and trials that invariably beset the course of true love that does not run smooth, and turn my attention to some other members of the family who have been somewhat neglected.

I must go back to the time of Delia Parnell's marriage. It was not a love match on her part. She married Mr. Livingstone Thomson for his money, and had frankly told him so beforehand; but he was so infatuated with her that he was content to take her on any terms. My

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mother had not liked the union, as her penetration enabled her to discern that her future son-in-law was inclined to be of a very jealous disposition, which would not conduce to the happiness of married life, and her instinct turned out right. Shortly after their wedding Mr. Thomson developed the most extraordinary and unfounded jealousy, which rendered his wife's life a perfect torment to her. Their hotel in Paris, where they lived, was conducted on the most magnificent scale, and at St. Germains their palace resembled fairyland.

Mrs. Thomson took her place at once in the best society, and at the expiration of her mourning for her father, went out a great deal. She had won position in the world as one of its most beautiful women. She was known in her box at the theatre; people paused and looked after her as she went by in her carriage; and even amongst French women she was remarkable for her faultless taste in dress. As a matter of course, admirers flocked around her; but she kept them all at a respectful distance.

In Paris it was not the custom for husbands to show jealousy of their wives, whatever they might feel, or for husbands and wives to appear much together in society, but Mr. Thomson's poor attempts to conceal his jealous feelings

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only rendered him all the more ridiculous. He also insisted on always accompanying his wife wherever she went, and even appeared at her afternoon receptions, an almost unheard-of proceeding in Parisian society. He succeeded in becoming the laughing-stock of all, much to Delia's annoyance, especially when he even went so far as to object to other men putting her cloak on when she was leaving a party, and transgressed all *convenances* by doing so himself.

Before they married, Mr. Thomson had made a request that Delia should relinquish her riding, which she was very fond of. She was a graceful and daring rider, and was one of the best horsewomen of the day, but Mr. Thomson was not able to ride, and objected to her going alone, attended only by a groom. Delia had acceded to this demand, but even when she drove or walked he was always with her. At St. Germains she had to confine her walking exercise to pacing up and down in front on the veranda, where Mr. Thomson would sit and watch her. After the birth of a son, Mr. Thomson decided he did not want any more children, and the boy was put with his nurse to inhabit the extreme end of the house. As he got older Mr. Thomson became

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more impossible. The gay life his wife led, the admiration she received, unlimited money, her handsome and costly carriage horses, diamonds and lovely dresses, did not compensate her for the miseries caused by her husband's jealous disposition, or for (on her part) a loveless marriage.

NOTE.—Since writing this chapter, my brother, Mr. John Howard Parnell, on looking through some old letters discovered the reason of the apparent act of injustice done to him by his father's passing him over in his will in favour of his younger brother. It seems Sir Ralph Howard had promised to make John (called Howard after him) his heir, but this he ultimately did not do. My father, therefore, relying on this promise, passed him over in the disposal of his property.

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CHAPTER IV

REMORSE

"Remorse is as the heart on which it grows;
If that be gentle, it drops balmy dews
Of true repentance."

—COLERIDGE.

CHARLES STEWART PARNELL had meanwhile been sent to Cambridge, where he was supposed to be preparing for his future responsibilities as a landlord and head of the family.

During his sojourn at the University a very unhappy event occurred, which we would willingly cover with the large cloak of charity, and ignore but for the baneful influence it had on his after life, and for the explanation it affords of the counter-stroke which Fate struck him in his later years. So true is the scriptural mandate which says, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

His Cambridge days were boyishly happy with all the "long, long thoughts" of youth that distinguish an undergraduate's life; with also, it must be confessed, a good deal of the recklessness of character which distinguishes the Cambridge undergraduate from his more staid

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brother of Oxford, a recklessness, however, in its milder aspects, preferred by many to the scholarly youthful calm of the latter, who say that, as a rule, Cambridge turns out better specimens of all-round manhood than Oxford.

Be this as it may, it would have been well for Charles if he had been more of the Cambridge athlete in his college days and less of a student of human nature. There is an age at which it may prove a rather dangerous study, and lead to unfortunate side issues. He was now at that age, and he possessed besides the headlong impetuosity and tendency to live in the present, regardless of a future, which characterise the Irish race, especially in their teens. A year of this Cambridge life of mingled work and play went by, Charles trying to fit himself for the public life which was, even then, his greatest ambition, while enjoying to the full the college friendships, debating clubs, and wine parties, which serve to brighten the grey existence of an undergraduate. It was then, when he had reached his nineteenth year, that the first tragedy of his life came, a tragedy in which, alas! another suffered, though released by the hand of death from sharing the lifelong remorse which was his heritage.

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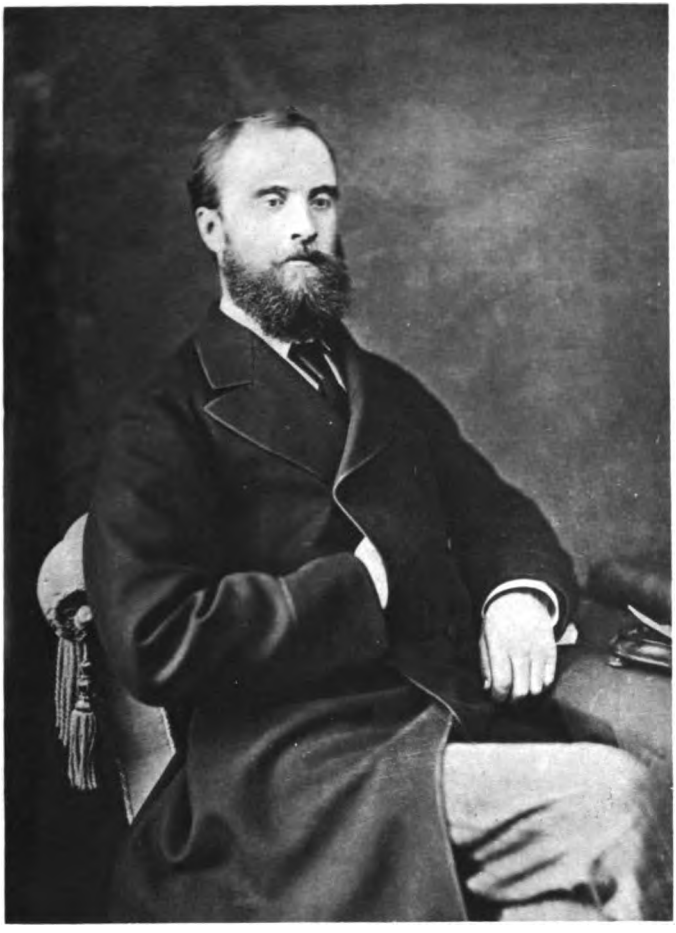

Charles Stewart Parnell
Ætat 20

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Boating was as popular then as now on the Cam, and Charles was one of the most enthusiastic oarsmen on the river, spending nearly all his spare time in flannels. As is well known, the county that gave England her Cromwell is studded with farms, tilled by the sturdy yeoman stock that supplied that remarkable man with some of his bravest Ironsides. One of the best cultivated of these sober English homesteads lay a couple of miles down the river, sloping to its bank. It was frequently passed and repassed by the various boat-clubs. In the old fruit-garden nearest the river might be seen, on several days of the week, a young girl, not more than sixteen, of remarkable loveliness, engaged, basket in hand, in picking fruit. She was the daughter of the owner of the farm, an old and much-respected inhabitant of the district, though in far from affluent circumstances. A considerable share of the profits from the farm came from the sale of the fruit, which was managed by Daisy, young as she was.

Daisy was as innocent as the large-eyed flowers from which she took her name, wholly unconscious of her charms and therefore more charming. Her blue eyes and golden hair, with the white dresses which she generally wore, made her an entrancing picture, especially to the

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uncritical eyes and susceptible heart of nineteen, and Charles had no sooner seen her in the glow of a summer evening than he resolved to make her acquaintance. This he easily managed, as even at that age he was developing some of the ingenuity of resource which afterwards served him in worthier causes. The next day he arranged to be at the same place at the hour when the fruit-picking was in progress for the following day's market, and was even more charmed by a closer view of the delicate, rose-tinted face under the white sunbonnet. Daisy, on her part, though apparently more intent on the plum and pear trees than ever, was for the first time blissfully aware that the dark-haired young gentleman with the inscrutable eyes, whom she had often noticed on the river, preferred gazing at her to practising his strokes. She was not a vain girl, coming from an ancestry that had covered their sweetest faces with the Puritan hoods as a protest against the vanity and worldliness of the Cavalier court, and that were distinctly religious in their habits of thought, though often grotesque in their modes of expressing them. Her knowledge of the world was very small. Living in a secluded district with few neighbours, love in connection with herself had hardly yet entered her head; and

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she had no mother. Little wonder then that it was with something of the wonder and the thrill of a first emotion that she received the unspoken homage of a handsome youth, whom she knew to be a member of the neighbouring university, and far above her station in life.

An acquaintance was quickly made by means of a fortunate accident to Charles's oar and the borrowing of some cord, and he arranged to meet Daisy on future evenings, charging her to strict secrecy in fear of his college authorities. The young girl willingly promised. She was already captivated by his fascination, and understood the dreadful consequences that would ensue if their new friendship came even to her father's ears. No thought of injuring a peaceful heart, still less of any wrongdoing, had entered Charles's head. His artistic sensibilities were kindled by the beauty of a flower in, as he thought, an unfavourable soil, and since leaving his family he had often yearned for feminine society. He therefore magnanimously resolved to give Daisy a good deal of his improving society, and help to advance her education.

In the long evening walks, when the fruit season was over, the acquaintance ripened into a deep and trusting affection on the girl's part, and an equally strong, though less pure and

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unselfish passion on the boy's part. He knew it was impossible to marry Daisy, lovely and innocent though she was, as he was under age and a ward of Chancery.

At nineteen one does not analyse one's emotions, nor does a youth know how to exercise the self-discipline and restraint that come with later years. They were lovers and happy in each other's society, until their paradise was spoiled by an impulse of young passion, and, as is usually the case, the ebb-tide, on one side at least, set in from that hour. A coldness and estrangement gradually grew between them, and an increasing wretchedness on the girl's part, who was sensitive and inexperienced. Charles was with her as frequently as ever. Though their meetings had lost their first joy, he, to do him justice, had no idea of the misery the poor girl suffered, or that she contemplated self-destruction. He was rudely awakened. One morning, on coming along the river bank, near the place where Daisy and he had first met, he caught the sound of many frightened voices. On turning a bend in the path he suddenly came on a group which haunted him for years after. A small crowd of villagers was gathered round a figure that had just been dragged from the river, now swollen with heavy rain. A woman held the

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head that was covered with dank masses of golden hair, and the slender, dripping form was that of a young girl. Pushing aside the crowd with a gasp of horror, Charles recognised the body of his little wife, as he had called Daisy. She was quite dead, and, as one of the bystanders said, must have been in the water for many hours. It was a sad ending to a bright young life, and if ever a man (for he ceased to be a boy from that hour) understood the meaning of remorse, of the "worm that dieth not and the fire that is not quenched," it was Charles as he gazed at the lifeless form that had contained so pure and loving a soul.

His wild looks and frenzied exclamations, as he knelt beside the body, excited the curiosity of the bystanders. None of them knew him as an acquaintance of Daisy's, so loyally had she kept her promise, and they had never been seen together in the village.

Restraining with a strong effort his emotions, he got some of the onlookers to assist him in conveying the earthly remains of Daisy to the village inn, remembering in an agony of remorse their first meeting, almost in the same place six months before. His first thought was of her old father, to whom Daisy had been passionately devoted, and to whom she was as the apple of

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his eye, often begging Charles to allow her to tell him of their friendship. A message was sent to the farm to warn him of an accident that had happened to Daisy, and sick with his own anguish, as well as the thought of the old man's grief, Charles went back to college, though he never afterwards knew how he got there.

An inquest was held, at which he was present as a witness. While shielding the girl's name from slander, he admitted having a great admiration and friendship for her, and the shock which her death gave him.

The usual verdict of suicide while temporarily insane, the bald words in which twelve stolid Englishmen sum up some of the deepest hidden tragedies of life, was pronounced over Daisy's lifeless form. She was buried in the village churchyard with her namesake flowers growing round her, and for Charles a lifelong punishment began.

Various versions of his acquaintance with the dead girl had come to the knowledge of the heads of his college, and Charles's name was formally removed from the books of his university.

Cambridge was now hateful to him, and he thought this punishment a very light one

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compared with the torturing remorse which was to haunt him the greater part of, if not all, his life. His family were unaware of the exact nature of the blow that was crushing him. Long after his first frenzied grief had given place to the saddened calm which marked all his after life, he reaped the consequences of his youthful folly and selfishness, and was the frequent victim of violent nervous attacks. In these would appear before him, in the dead of the night, standing at the foot of his bed, the dripping white-clad form, with locks like a cataract of golden rain, which he had seen that morning on the river bank.

The cause of these attacks, and of his frequent fits of nervous depression, was unknown to any of his family until several years after, when an accident revealed them.

It was one autumn at Avondale after my marriage, when Arthur and I were staying there. The cricket was in full swing, and the house was full of guests. Charles had asked Arthur to share his room, which, when feeling more than usually nervous at night alone, he often did. There had been a merry dinner party the night before, succeeded by a dance, but every one noticed how worn and grave Charles appeared. I was puzzled, knowing his prospects

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and popularity were at their brightest. I attributed his altered looks to ill-health, in spite of his assurance that he was perfectly well. In the morning, coming down the corridor I met Arthur, and was surprised at his grave expression in spite of my gay greeting. He drew me into the library instead of going into the dining-room, and, after complimenting me on my morning appearance, put me into a big chair. "What is it, Arthur?" I said; "you look quite ghostly." "I want to ask you about Charles," was the answer. "Has he ever had an *affaire de cœur?* He has been disturbing me half the night, moaning and calling out about some Daisy, and at one time he got so frenzied with a vision at the foot of the bed, that I had to hold him. I didn't like to ask him, as he didn't give me his confidence. It was only by the mere chance of my sharing his room last night that I learnt that there was something on his mind. Poor fellow," he continued, striding up and down the room, "I will never forget his face when he said, pointing to the foot of the bed, 'Daisy is there.' He musn't be allowed to brood over this affair, whatever it is." I was very much shocked. Somehow Charles had always seemed something of an anchorite to me, yet, remem-

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bering chance words and allusions, and the sudden termination of his college career, I discovered with a flash of insight the whole cause of his altered and careworn looks.

"We must all make much of him," I said; "and now let us go into breakfast, the others will be waiting." Watching Charles from my place at the head of the table, I was struck anew by his haggard look as he entered the room, and from that day recognised that there had been a hidden tragedy in his young life, the cause of the saddened melancholy of his nature, and also the cause of the utter indifference to woman's charms which characterised him, and about which he had been often rallied by both Arthur and myself. Though always treating women with an almost knight-errant chivalry and respect, he never seemed to desire either their friendship or their love, though, like most men with an early romance, possessing a mysterious fascination for many of them.

When at home for the vacation, in the earlier years of his mother's residence in Dublin, Charles went in a great deal for hunting. He had inherited his father's love of horses and gift of horsemanship. One instance of his solicitude and consideration

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for his tired steed may here be mentioned. It was his frequent habit to relieve his horse of his weight altogether, after a heavy day with the Wards, by walking all the way home himself, sometimes over twelve miles, leading his jaded animal. In this he even surpassed his father. He took a keen relish in the inexpressible intoxicating sport of hunting, in the thundering rush of the hunt itself, but some doctor telling him he had heart disease, and must avoid excitement, he reluctantly abandoned his favourite recreation. The doctor's opinion afterwards turned out erroneous.

Charles had not as yet shown any Radical tendencies; rather the reverse.

It was during this time that the Fenian movement took place. Charles evinced no sympathy with the Fenians, and was vexed with his mother for taking the active part on their behalf which she did, and for mixing herself up so much with their affairs.

My mother felt a most lively interest in the sufferings of these poor men, spending money liberally on their necessities, and smuggling some at her own expense off to America, thus enabling them to escape arrest and imprisonment. She even went the length of hiding and harbouring

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some in her own house. This was the cause of suspicion being directed against it by the Castle authorities, and a search was ordered and made;[1] but on that occasion no Fenians or trace of their presence was found, nothing, in fact, but the swords belonging to John and Charles, which they had worn when attending levees, and my love-letters from Arthur. The former (the swords) the search party captured, evidently considering they had performed a great feat, but they indulgently told me I might keep my love-letters.

Soon after my wedding my sister came of age and was dismissed as a ward from Court. Her husband proposed to reveal their marriage, but being afraid that if the Scotch ceremony was made known he might be brought to book by the Lord Chancellor for running away with one of his wards, and would probably be imprisoned, he decided that they should go through the form of marriage in church, and have a notice of it inserted in the papers, and that the previous one in Scotland should not be mentioned. This they accordingly did, not, however, with my mother's consent, to whom such a match for her peerless daughter was a tremendous disappointment. Indeed, it was an amazement to the whole of

[1] Lord Carlisle had been dead for some time.

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Dublin, and to every one who had seen or known her. Afterwards the oddly matched pair were called "Beauty and the Beast." Needless to say which was "Beauty" and which was "Beast."

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CHAPTER V

CRICKET

"The Ball no question makes of Ayes and Noes,
But right or left, as strikes the Player, goes."
—OMAR KHAYYAM.

ARTHUR and I spent our honeymoon in Paris, first on a visit to my uncle, Colonel Stewart, and secondly, with my sister, Mrs. Livingstone Thomson, at St. Germains. The latter place struck me as a perfect fairyland. Delia's magnificent Russian horses were an endless delight to me. I enjoyed the pleasant drives in the charming forests of St. Germains immensely, but I did not envy my sister her wealth, or the evidence of it which manifested itself on all sides. On the contrary, I pitied her, for in spite of all, I saw Delia was not happy.

On leaving St. Germains, Arthur introduced me in my new rôle as his wife to his brother officers, who gave me a hearty reception, and celebrated my advent amongst them with a dance. The regiment was again quartered in England, but was not destined to remain there long. In less than a year it was under orders for the Cape of

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Good Hope, on a fortnight's notice. I had always been an exceptionally bad sailor, and just now was more than usually delicate. Under the circumstances it was considered the journey would be a risk, and my family were much opposed to my undertaking it. Arthur decided I should not be allowed to do so. Then came the question of separation, for Arthur *had* to go. In the end he found he could not bring himself to leave his wife of a year, even temporarily, but what was he to do? Finally, he resolved on throwing up his career, and tendered his resignation. I thought it a pity he should leave the army, where he was getting on so well, and remonstrated with him. I begged him at least not to act hastily, but to give the matter due consideration. I also suggested that I might join him later on, and said that in any case the separation would be only temporary, and that I thought it would be very unwise for him to relinquish his career.

"My darling, what are all the careers in the world to me in comparison with you?" Arthur protested. "We survived separation before our marriage," I reminded him. "But you are now my wife. I won't be parted from my wife; so don't say another word. My mind is made up. I shall get a land agency, and we will live in Dublin." So it was settled. Arthur obtained a

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land agency, and took a house in Dublin, the furnishing of which gave him and me plenty of pleasant occupation.

My mother was about giving up her house with the intention of residing in Paris with her brother. Her mother was dead. She had got leave from the Court to take the younger members of the family with her. Fanny was to go to Lady Howard's. Fanny was talented and very pretty, neither fair nor dark, but something between. She had brown hair, aquiline features, a fair complexion slightly touched by the damask of the rose, and a slight but well-proportioned figure. Her eyes were dark blue. She had had proposals in Dublin, but was ambitious of marrying well, and none of them had come up to the mark.

Meanwhile Charles, having reached, in the eyes of the law, years of discretion, had taken up his residence at Avondale in solitary grandeur, where he interested himself in sawmills and mining operations.

Shortly after he came of age, Arthur, who was now his right-hand man, endeavoured to persuade him that the correct way of celebrating the attainment of his independence would be to have what he called "a real spree." This was a suggestion which found favour in Charles's eyes, and was forthwith carried out. It took

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the form of a three days' cricket match between the officers of the garrison of Dublin and the Wicklow team. It was decided to put the officers, a good dozen or more, up at Avondale, without, however, disturbing a Mrs. Moore, who with her two lovely daughters were then staying there with me. The arrangement of the rooms was left to me, who was to act as hostess, and who was supposed to inherit my mother's talent in this capacity. A little management was found necessary to ensure sufficient accommodation. It was proposed that the men of the party, Charles and his brother Henry, Arthur and a Mr. Frederick C——, the latter one of my latest admirers, should sleep over at the dower-house, Casino, situated on the lawn, on mattresses on the floor, provided from Avondale, Casino being destitute of furniture. In this way, and by putting two or three officers in one room, enough space would be contrived.

The ensuing week was passed in all the bustle of preparations attendant on such a festive occasion. Numerous invitations were sent to the county gentry, and also to friends and acquaintances in Dublin, from whence a military band had been bespoken, and the fame of this having got abroad enhanced considerably the importance of the event. Rooms were taken

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at the hotel for the band. Tents and marquees were erected, in one of which afternoon tea and ices were to be served. The ballroom was swept, and the floor polished; musicians engaged; the wine ordered. Arthur, having undertaken the catering, for which he had *carte blanche*, was able to uphold the credit of the army, and by the time the early train from Dublin brought down the officers and the first batch of visitors invited from town for that day, everything was ready and all preparations completed. Avondale looked its loveliest on a fine ripe day in July; the sky of pure and cloudless blue; all the glory of the morning sunshine and the full summer bathing it in floods of living gold; the avenue overshadowed by stately oaks and broad branching elms in all the glorious panoply of opulent summer leafage. The beautiful lawn, overburdened with its wealth of majestic old timber of every description, stretched grand and impressive in the distance, disclosing the shining and swiftly flowing river in the hollow—a sight calculated to strike the visitors with the greatest admiration, who were fresh from, and weary of, the dust and heat of Dublin.

The merry party, all bent on enjoyment, coming up the avenue, were greeted by the

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strains of the band, interspersed with the cawing of the rooks, which sounded weird and strange through the ancient place.

At eleven o'clock the signal was given for the match to commence. Charles, like his father, was very fond of cricket, a game in which, also like him, he excelled.

For the first three hours the match proceeded with indefatigable zeal and good scoring on the part of Wicklow. When the gong sounded for luncheon, the hungry guests adjourned to the house to do justice to the appetising and hospitable collation prepared for them.

Before this the county families had arrived, and helped to fill the spacious and grand old dining-room, with its ceiling and walls of curious, quaint Italian carving and sculpture. The long mahogany table glittered with silver and sparkled with flowers which delighted the eye, while the hospitality of the house was shown by the triumphs of culinary skill under which the table groaned, and was strained to its utmost limits to supply room for all.

Healths were drunk, a custom prevalent in those days; the champagne flowed freely, and many brilliant and even eloquent speeches followed the repast. Then the cricketers reluctantly returned to their game, which at first

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they made a pretence of continuing with the ardour of the morning, but alas for human infirmity, and for man's in particular, gradually it became apparent that the presence of so many of the fair sex, which included several very pretty girls, and still prettier young matrons, was beginning to tell, and threatening to distract the attention of the players, especially that of the army, who, however, to do them justice, for that afternoon at least, bravely fought against the disturbing influence, and succeeded partially in keeping the enemy at bay.

The wickets were drawn at six, and the company dispersed to prepare for dinner, with the exception of those who had come down from Dublin for the day, and who had to return by the late train.

Dinner was as great a success as the luncheon, and the wine again flowed freely according to the custom of the day. In due course the musicians struck up for dancing, which was kept in full swing until a late hour, and terminated by a generous supper, and once more the champagne went round.

The county magnates then dispersing to their different homes, I suggested to Mrs. Moore that we also should retire. The distant sound of music-hall songs, varied by much riotous laughter

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and clapping of hands, succeeded the departure of the ladies, and faintly reached us in our apartments. Further than this no disturbance of any consequence occurred that first night, and in the small hours of the morning the noisy party proceeded with commendable orderliness to seek their respective couches, and soon silence reigned in the house.

The next morning the festivities were resumed, commencing with a substantial breakfast, and the cricketers, feeling like giants refreshed, continued the match with renewed energy. The batch of visitors from Dublin for the second day included an exceedingly pretty young widow, who was still garbed in woe for her late dearly beloved departed, and whom I had promised to put up at Avondale. The weather remained glorious, the band and rooks performed energetically, and the county visitors again turned out in full force and in best summer attire in time for luncheon, after which meal an increased tendency towards disinclination for the continuance of the game was more openly demonstrated by the parties concerned.

Charles, who was anxious to have the match completed, perceiving signs of mutiny amongst the cricketers, exhibited the arbitrative qualities for which he was afterwards so conspicuous, and called

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them all to order. For a time the game again progressed with exemplary attention. Suddenly the representatives of His Majesty's service, who were the ringleaders, declaring it was impossible to keep their eyes on the ball surrounded by so much to distract them, threw down their bats, and, joining the ladies, the whole party paired off into the woods. Now commenced a scene of fun and flirtation which surpasses description, and which had probably never before been equalled in the old haunts of Avondale. In every shady nook and corner were to be seen an isolated couple engaged in the pleasant pastime of love-making, the young widow, notwithstanding her robes of black, being foremost in the practice of the art. Charles, yielding with philosophical resignation to the inevitable, had himself followed the general example, and had selected as his companion Miss May P——, a lovely girl, whose father was anxious to secure Charles for a son-in-law. It was the opinion of some that he would succeed in his design, but Charles could never be brought quite to the point, and May afterwards married a lord. Arthur electing to amuse himself with the widow, Mr. Frederick C——, a rising and extremely handsome young politician, who had fallen a victim to my charms when he had met me shortly after Arthur's

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retirement from the army, and I strolled away together down to the river. Up to the present Frederick's conduct at all times, and especially when alone with me, had always been marked with the greatest respect and circumspection, and as yet he had never ventured to give his feelings utterance.

On this occasion, however, having, in common with the rest, shown due appreciation of his host's excellent champagne, he rashly declared his love, but was quickly recalled to his senses when, turning on him like a little fury and stamping my foot, I demanded how he dared insult me. "Oh!" moaned poor Frederick, "now I have vexed you, and you won't be friends with me any more." Overcome with emotion he threw himself on the grass and sobbed like a child. This novel spectacle brought all the cows round in wondering surprise to gaze at him. "Get up," I told him hard-heartedly, still too indignant for a softer mood, "the cows are laughing at you;" whereupon Frederick arose, made his peace with me, and we both entered into a compact of friendship which lasted for years.

The hours passed all too quickly, and again the big gong booming out reminded the wanderers that such an unromantic necessity as dinner

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existed. The dinner the second day did full credit to Arthur's powers as caterer, and the wine continued to flow as freely as ever. Again the musicians struck up for dancing. The ballroom was large and handsome. Spacious mirrors in gilt frames formed panels in the lower part of the walls, the remainder being toned in sage green, and in each recess between the mirrors was a statue.

Dancing was carried on with even greater zest than on the previous evening. The interesting widow attracted a large share of attention. I, too, whose manners as hostess were enhanced by a sweetly pretty and most becoming blue and white Parisian toilette, had achieved two fresh conquests, a Major G—— and a Captain V——, both much *épris*, especially the former, who forthwith conceived a hostile feeling towards Arthur, which was returned with interest. Having noticed, notwithstanding his apparent absorption in the widow, that Major G—— and I had danced several times together, Arthur approached and demanded of Major G——, "What the devil do you mean by dancing so often with my wife?" "What's that to you? Mind your own business," retorted Major G——. Arthur's temper rose at this reply, and he answered with heat,

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"I demand that you will give me the satisfaction of fighting it out on the lawn," but here Charles, exercising his privilege as host, and a few others interfered, and had the would-be combatants parted. Again, having partaken of a good supper, the county families drove off to their different abodes. Once more I proposed to Mrs. Moore that we too should retreat, but first the widow had to be disposed of for the night, which presented considerable difficulty, for every room was full. In desperation, and longing for a few hours' sleep, I at last put her into a room in which two of the officers had slept the night before, impressing on her to be sure and push the chest of drawers against the door, to which there was no key, telling her if she was disturbed to come to me, whose room was opposite. Then, wishing her pleasant dreams, left her to her fate, and the two men, whose room she had, unknown to them, appropriated, to spend the night as best they could. Again the distant sounds of revelry were heard in the direction of the supper room, accompanied by more rollicking songs and popping of champagne corks, and at length the riotous crew began to come upstairs to bed, some without lights, trusting to those in the passages. Amongst these revellers were the two whose room was

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occupied by the widow, and several others who were also under the delusion, or, perhaps, who can say? actuated by some natural law of instinct with reference to widows, that this particular apartment also belonged to them. All made for the identical room where the young widow reposed in blissful slumber in a huge old-fashioned four-poster, large enough for the comfortable accommodation of a whole family. Finding the door barricaded they hurled themselves in a body against it, and upsetting with a crash the chest of drawers, entered the room.

"I say, there's room for us all here," one called out. The startled widow, on hearing this, slipped out of bed and escaped. Three more of the hilarious party ensconced themselves in the linen-press, which they mistook for their beds, another installed himself cosily in the shower-bath, and a fifth made frantic attempts to get up the chimney, insisting that that was his bed. In due course, however, all quieted down, and the house was wrapped in silence. The next morning the widow received a letter from her solicitor, who was supposed to have a weakness for her. He stated that from rumours which had reached him with reference to the festivities at Avondale, which he understood was full of officers, who were

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all excited, it was evident that the house was not fit for her, and he peremptorily exhorted here to return to Dublin by the earliest train, which she did.

The third day being much a repetition of the one before, it is unnecessary to describe it in full. There was a final attempt to finish the ill-fated match, again abandoned in favour of the rival and superior attractions of the ladies, more roaming, loitering, and spooning under the leafy trees in the woods, more eating and drinking, more dancing and flirting, but *not* another night. Charles had discreetly ordered a "special" to take the Dublin party, including the officers, back to town at one o'clock, so the festive scene broke up, after supper, at midnight. Then ensued handshakings and farewells, "and there were sudden partings such as press the life from out young hearts, and choking sighs which ne'er might be repeated."

Finding it very hard to part, the guests tore themselves away, some of the officers singing, as they went down the avenue, "The girl I have left behind me," others shouting out to Charles, who stood on the terrace watching their departure by moonlight, that they would play the return match on some other occasion.

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The county families also bade hostess and host good-night, expressing with seeming sincerity grateful thanks for the pleasant time they had had, but, notwithstanding that they had partaken of Charles's hospitality and enjoyed themselves immensely, afterwards professed themselves much shocked, and abused the whole entertainment soundly. Quoth Charles, as he re-entered the drawing-room with Arthur, after speeding the last of the departing guests, "the next cricket match I have I won't ask any ladies, or at least only ugly ones." "Well, Charles," said Arthur, who did not particularly care for cricket, "of course fellows would rather be spooning nice girls in the shady woods than running about in a hot sun with bats in their hands, and if you collect together all the prettiest girls available, what can you expect?" "Didn't Mouse look pretty?" asked Charles irrelevantly—Mouse was the pet name for May P——. "And, by Jove! didn't Pussy look ripping?"—his pet name for me—supplemented Arthur. Now that, in consequence of her absence, the fascinations of the widow were getting hazy, suddenly becoming affectionate, he put his arm round my waist. "She did," agreed Charles, "and if she always looks as charming as she does when acting hostess, I

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shall be in love with her myself. No wonder the fellows all admired her so much." Here I yawned. "I am dying for a good long sleep," I said, and Charles, as he lighted a bedroom candle, remarked, "After sleeping on the floor I shall appreciate an 'elevated' bed again," and so we separated to seek a much-needed rest.

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CHAPTER VI

ROYAL

"Once in love and twice in war
Hath he borne me strong and far."
—E. B. Browning.

The life that opened out before me on first finding myself established in a house of my own, was full of novelty. All the world seemed fair to me, and full of movement, cheerfulness, and hope. Arthur and I, having already a large circle of friends and acquaintances, had every prospect of leading a happy and enjoyable existence.

A year had elapsed after my mother had gone to live with her brother, Colonel Stewart, when the latter died rather suddenly, leaving the whole of his immense fortune to his sister.

Admiral Stewart's death had occurred shortly before, so that my mother, by American law, came in for all his money too, as she inherited her brother's share on his death as well as her own.

She was now quite a millionairess, and able to make me a liberal allowance, so Arthur and

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I were able to indulge our mutual taste for horses. I resumed my hunting. Since my father's death I had been in possession of my mare, which I had been allowed to claim as my own on the occasion of the auction at Avondale of my father's personal property, but I had not cared to hunt. Now, accompanied by my husband, I took to it again with renewed energy, and it was during the next few years that I established my fame as a horsewoman. Arthur, who rode very well, and was nearly as fond of horses as I was, used to hunt regularly with the Wards, and many a pleasant day we had. Starting with a couple of hundred of red-coats and a sprinkling of dark habits, we would all jog along together some twelve miles to the place of meeting. Then the breakneck run of twenty minutes or half-an-hour at steeple-chase speed, followed by the return journey of fifteen or eighteen miles at a walking pace, relieved by an occasional jog.

How I enjoyed the cup of fragrant tea and slices of thin bread and butter after a ride of over thirty miles, only those who have experienced it can know.

After some difficulty I had succeeded in getting a horse to suit me. He was a blood royal, a perfect picture and a born hunter. A

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Mrs Monroe Dickenson on Royal

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beautiful, dark, rich bay, with black points and long, flowing, abundant mane and tail. His owner was the envy of all who saw him. Royal, as he was called, became quite a feature in Dublin. Pedestrians stood and looked at the horse and his rider as we passed along, until out of sight; the inmates of carriages and cabs, particularly the male sex, put their heads out of the windows to gaze after us; cavalry officers followed us to the stables in order to find out to whom the horse belonged, and whether any money would buy him. No money would buy him; and for seventeen years and a half Royal carried me right loyally and faithfully through thick and thin, never failing me under any circumstances. We had innumerable adventures and hair-breadth escapes, out of which we both came unhurt. The most marvellous, perhaps, was once when Royal accomplished the feat of falling backwards over a precipice on top of me, who was dragged from under him, without injury to either. The fall was broken through a quantity of leaves at the bottom, which made a sort of feather-bed. It was no doubt due to this that neither horse nor rider was hurt. One of Royal's cleverest performances was one day when trotting smartly round the west corner of Stephen's Green with me on his back. A

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donkey-cart, driven by an old woman, getting in his way, he jumped clean over the cart, clearing by a couple of inches the head of the terrified old lady. The car-men standing by marked their appreciation of this feat by a ringing cheer.

Royal died eventually at the age of twenty-two, from inflammation caused by eating too much new hay, which had been given him without my knowledge. I had taken my last ride on him the previous day, when he was in such health and spirits that it took all my strength to hold him. The day of Royal's death was a black one at Avondale, where the event happened, for the horse had been so long in the family that he seemed to be part of it. His beautiful temper and gentle nature had endeared him to all.

Having been summoned early in the morning to the stables, Royal, knowing his mistress's footsteps, though in great pain, turned his head as I entered the stables, and greeted me with a whinny. No work was done that day at Avondale; the family remained with the dying favourite, and the workpeople thronged the yard, while two of them rubbed him, one on each side. Poor Royal groaned more like a human being than an animal, and the big drops

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of perspiration caused by his agony poured down like water. Through it all the noble beast seemed conscious of the care lavished on him, and grateful for it. The veterinary surgeon, who had been sent for, stood by, unable to do anything.

Royal's large, dark eyes turned now and then wistfully to the corner where I stood, wrestling with my tearless grief at his sufferings. Up to the last he kept on his feet, leaning against the wall, and only at the end of the nine hours he suddenly fell, and after a slight struggle, with a big sigh of relief, breathed his last.

The men made a grand grave, railed round, in the garden, with an inscription over it: "Royal, loyal and true, who for seventeen years and a half carried Mrs. Dickinson."

Arthur had also a good mount, a horse called Tory. One day, looking at him out at grass at Avondale, Charles had thus named him, on account of his lean nature, which refused to put on flesh. He said the horse resembled a Conservative in that he had an opportunity of improving his condition and would not do so, so Tory he remained. Charles's political opinions were thus early shown by the sentiments he expressed.

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He lost no opportunity of impressing on me, between whom and himself there existed a certain rivalry in the matter of horses, that I would never have any luck with horses called after the royal family. However, it was I who had most unusual luck with them, whereas Charles was always singularly unlucky, although he gave them Nationalist names, such as Home Rule, &c.

So four years passed very pleasantly. Arthur had been unanimously elected a member of the United Service Club. This club at that time was the gayest in the city; in fact, it had become so fast that it resembled a certain famous club of an earlier date. Consisting altogether of officers, who were much faster as a class then than they are now, drinking and gambling assumed alarming proportions. They spent night after night over the card tables, and daylight still found them at it, whilst champagne and whisky were consumed freely. It was a bad school for a young man of Arthur's disposition to have got into. It was also bad for him not to have any occupation other than that of amusement. He missed, too, the wholesome discipline of the army. Being of a very enthusiastic, genial, social character, with a strain of wildness, and easily led, but

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extremely lovable, certain signs of deterioration, in consequence of the bad example around him, began to show themselves. These were at first very faint, but gradually increased, until at last his friends became apprehensive of the future both for him and me. Much sympathy was felt for me, who expected soon to become a mother. In due course the baby was born—a girl, called Delia, after her grandmother. This event, which those who had his interest at heart had urgently hoped and expected would arrest the progress of Arthur's downward career, only seemed to have the effect of urging him on quicker, and yet he was very fond of the child, and fonder and prouder of me than ever.

He often told me that he hoped he would die the first, as he knew he would not be able to live without me. Indeed, it would afterwards seem as if he was doing his best to bring this about by shortening, through the pernicious and fatal effects of indulgence in drink, a life which, by virtue of his uncommon strength, should have lasted to a vigorous old age.

My experience was such that I had no idea of the cause of my husband's ailment; others knew better, but could not bring themselves to enlighten me. Time and circumstances, however, did that most effectually.

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No description could convey an idea of the magnitude of the shock on first having my eyes opened, but determination and reason overcame this, and I set myself to the endeavour of counteracting, with wifely influence, the demon of drink, only to find that there is no rival so strong, against which to maintain any permanent weight, once it has taken a hold of a man, and has reduced his will to the weakness of an infant, when the craving for spirits has got him in its grasp. For the next ten years it was my fate to watch the progress of this insidious disease, to go through all the different and various phases which attend its course, to strain every nerve in the endeavour to keep Arthur out of trouble; and when, notwithstanding my efforts, he persisted on getting into scrapes—for he was always in hot water—I spared neither money nor exertion to extricate him from the consequences of his folly. I could tell of awful scenes—terrible days and terrible nights. What words can describe the torture of witnessing the slow but sure descent of one you love, of seeing him go from bad to worse, and feeling your utter impotency to save him? Of watching his frantic struggles to resist the temptation, only to fall again in the end; and, saddest of all, the sight of his remorse and

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repentance, his tears and promises of reformation—in fact, the piteous spectacle of a strong man drinking himself slowly but surely to death? Such scenes, repeated again and again, no words can adequately describe; neither can those who have not experienced it have any conception of what a hell on earth a woman undergoes under such circumstances.

Still, there were sometimes long intervals of abstinence on Arthur's part and of comparative happiness, for when his own bright, sweet-natured self, he was always the best of company. The trying scenes I had to endure did not kill a love which excuses everything, forgives everything, condones everything. My love was all the stronger by reason of a certain protective element in it. My powerlessness to save Arthur hurt that motherly instinct of pity and protection which is an element in the love of most women. They altered its nature, however, which changed into a sort of maternal affection. I thought of my husband as of something suffering, in need of protection, who seemed to depend on me, to whom I dedicated daily and hourly service—as of a mother, not a wife. I used to say I had two babies—one big and one small.

The little baby grew bigger under difficulties.

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My time was so taken up with her father that I was compelled to leave the child a great deal to nurses.

In the future it was a consolation to me to feel that my exertions on Arthur's behalf had been to a certain, though limited, extent rewarded with success. My vigilance succeeded in keeping him from worse trouble, into which he might have fallen, if he had been left altogether to his own devices. At times he displayed a violence which was especially directed against my brother-in-law, for whom he had ever cherished bitter feelings because he had dared to try and rob him of me, and I lived in fear that his repeated threats to shoot him would some day be carried out. Once, returning from a walk, and missing Arthur's gun from its customary place, with instinctive prevision I hastened to my brother-in-law's house, where I found Arthur standing on the doorstep with the gun in his hand. Inventing, in the emergency of the moment, an excuse, I coaxed him away, and on getting the dangerous weapon safely inside the house, forthwith placed it under lock and key, on pretence of restoring it to its place. It transpired afterwards the gun was not loaded, but at the time I was ignorant of this. In any case, I knew my brother-in-law would

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have made a "case" out of the harmless incident if he had got the chance.

In addition to all the rest, the taste for gambling had with opportunity and incitement increased to such an extent, and his losses were so great, that, added to the other ruinous consequences of drink, ruin began to stare him in the face.

At this crisis, Charles, just then at the beginning of his political career, made an attempt to come to my help. He persuaded Arthur to go away for a while with him to Avondale, and tried the effect of a constant surveillance. He would not allow any wine or spirits in the house; forbade any to be supplied; went without himself for the sake of example; and, in fact, did all and more that the best of brothers could do for another. This plan succeeded for a time. One day Arthur contrived to elude Charles's vigilance, and escaped into the town, whence he provided himself with a bottle of whisky, which he consumed that night in the privacy of his bedroom. Under its influence the system of surveillance to which he had recently been subjected assumed undue proportions. He imagined himself much insulted and very badly treated, in consequence of which he vented his feelings of resentment by bursting

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into Charles's room in the early hours of the morning, clutching a big stick in his hand, with all the mien of a madman. Flourishing the stick over the unfortunate Charles's head, he threatened to "go" for him. The alarmed occupant sprang from his bed quicker than he had ever done before, and rushing out in his nightshirt and slippers, spent the remainder of the sleeping hours in the yard.

The next day Charles sent Arthur back to Dublin. His next attempt to mend matters was not much more successful. He first did his utmost to persuade me to go in for a separation, which I refused to do. My refusal to comply with his wishes on this occasion was the cause of the only estrangement that ever existed between him and me. He then called together a family council, the result of which was that the family agreed to offer Arthur five hundred a year if he would live abroad without me, the agreement to become void and the allowance to cease if the condition attached should be violated. Arthur indignantly rejected this offer, asserting that he could not be bribed to live away from his wife.

Charles then washed his hands of the whole business, and threw himself with zeal into

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public life, having enlisted in the cause of the Nationalists. The groanings of his country incensed him against every crowned head. He flung himself into the contest for freedom, equality of privilege, and self-government.

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CHAPTER VII

MR. L——

"And thus he bore without abuse
The grand old name of gentleman,
Defamed by every charlatan,
And soiled with all ignoble use."
—TENNYSON.

A VERY pretty blue-and-white boudoir in a fashionable Dublin square. It is my sister's house, and she is herself seated at a little octagon table, dispensing tea in little blue cups. She is evidently rather angry, and is speaking earnestly. On a low chair near the fire, I am listening with a curious air of detachment in my attitude, as we listen to the criticisms of those who do not understand us. Both have changed but little since our first season. She looks the more matronly, and is perhaps conscious of it, as she advises her elder sister.

The subject of our conversation is Mr. L—— and his frequent visits to her house whenever there is the slightest chance of my being there.

"And not only that," my sister was saying, "but wherever I go people may be heard jesting

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about his devotion to you. There will be scandal about it. You were at the races to-day, and every one saw Mr. L—— anxiously scanning the course till you drove up with us, and then he never left your side all day."

I raised my eyebrows slightly, and smiled at her excitement.

"My dear child," I said, "if you are for ever thinking about what Dublin says, you will have enough to occupy your mind. I would advise you to think of better subjects. You know, and I know, that Mr. L—— is one of my oldest friends, and quite old enough to be my father. If he chooses to fancy himself in love with me, I am not to blame, and as for what people say, let them amuse themselves in their own way."

"If it were only amusing," my sister interjected. "Of course *we* know his age and all that; but he is a man, and you cannot have a man shadowing you everywhere without being talked about as being in love with each other."

"I have always found it more convenient to let the love be on one side," I said, laughing. "My wise sister is developing into a veritable dragon of the British matron type. Do not get cross, dear, and oh, do not lecture me. It does not suit you at all."

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The conversation ended, as it generally did, in her giving in to my views. She, though lovely and interesting, was of a very pliant nature, and her early marriage to a rather ordinary type of man had made her very conventional.

She was not always able to understand my stronger, more independent character.

Mr. L—— was a widower, and much older than I. His love for me, which was the rare, changeless and unselfish devotion of a true man, was destined to last through all the vicissitudes of the later years of my married life, and even until death rendered him powerless to serve me any longer.

He stood as a shield between me and all my difficulties, both great and small, in every way that he possibly could. He placed his time, his brains, his purse, his health, and would place even his very life, at my disposal, and all without the shadow of a hope of any return or reward.

I naturally regarded him more in the light of a father than of a lover, but Mr. L——'s feelings towards me were by no means paternal. He loved me with all the passionate fervour of a man capable of the deepest feeling, to whom the woman he loves is sacred, who is willing to sacrifice himself and his desires for

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her, and whose first object in life she is, and not himself.

Not to every one is given the priceless possession of a love like his, even once in a lifetime. Well for me it was to have such a faithful friend to help and advise me in the numerous perplexities and difficulties my position entailed, to sympathise in my many troubles, to encourage and cheer me in my hours of despondency, to make the rough places smooth and the crooked paths straight for me, and to sustain me in my fits of despair. He was the giver and I was the receiver. He gave all and took nothing—the true motto of love and charity—very different to the motto of modern manhood, "Take all and give nothing." Mr. L—— was more than content with the meagre exchange of gratitude he received for his unlimited and boundless love, manifested by constant acts of consideration and forethought.

Like most good men, he reverenced women, and treated them with the respect he considered them entitled to. It is, however, an indisputable fact that women, especially good women, seldom love good men to the same extent as they bestow their affections on worthless scamps. It is one of those enigmas

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that, as Dundreary would have said, "No fellar can understand." It is so, nevertheless. As, according to Longfellow, "affection never is wasted," we must only hope that the endless adoration lavished on bad men by good women may be the means ordained by God of producing beneficial results, which we in our short-sighted wisdom can neither foresee nor comprehend.

As the years passed, Arthur's periods of dissipation became longer and more frequent, with shorter and fewer intervals of steadiness between.

His brain having become somewhat affected, he was simply at these epochs like a lunatic at large, and did the most extraordinary things. Some of his eccentricities proved very expensive and inconvenient. For instance, one of the many different phases he exhibited found vent in burning his clothes. As fast as new ones were supplied him, he made a bonfire of them. Another inconvenient phase consisted in throwing the dinner, plates and glass, out of the window. One day a plate in its descent narrowly escaped braining a next-door neighbour who happened to be passing. Occasionally, he threw the servants down the staircase, but they were so fond of him that they did

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not mind such rough usage. Charles, to whom I had been relating this fact, remarked it was singular how some contrived to inspire affection. He did not think, if *he* threw his servants down the staircase, that they would take it so quietly from *him*.

Towards me personally Arthur never evinced any violence, and even in his worst moments never forgot I was his wife, and that he was fond of me.

One night he returned late from the club very much the worse for wine. On entering the room where I was awaiting his return, not having yet undressed, he approached me and put his hand round my throat. "Pussy, I am so fond of you I feel that I should like to strangle you," his fingers tightening, as he spoke, round my throat.

Turning pale, but preserving my presence of mind, I laughed up in his face.

"Oh, Arthur! you know you would be sorry, and would be punished."

"Yes, I know; and I know I would be sorry, but I can't help it. I do love you so much."

"Well," I rejoined, feeling his fingers tightening more and more, "come down to the dining-room, where there is more light and space."

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Still looking him calmly in the face, I coaxed him step by step towards the door, which was shut, and asked him to open it. He relaxed his hold of my throat in order to do so. Taking advantage of my freedom, I sprang down the staircase, and snatching up a shawl in the hall, ran out into the street, where, watched by a suspicious policeman on the opposite side, I spent the night pacing backwards and forwards in the rain.

After this, I never ventured to undress or to go to bed at such times.

I frequently passed weeks without any rest, excepting a short sleep snatched during quiet interludes, or without taking my clothes off, except to take a bath.

Arthur was far too restless to remain quiet. He would wander all over the house, in and out of every room, until the morning. Then, tired out, he would fall asleep for a while in his dressing-room.

Friends and acquaintances began to look askance, and partly because every one was very much afraid; some omitted Arthur in their invitations, but I refused to go to entertainments from which he was excluded. I also resented the reception of such invitations, which I considered added insult to injury, for I

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thought, unless both were asked, it would have been better taste not to ask either.

Thus it came to pass that I offended the greater number of acquaintances and so-called friends by not only declining their invitations, but even a continuance of their acquaintance. Whilst I was existing as best I could, my sister was having ample time to repent of her rash marriage—not that she ever confessed to doing so. She, too, was fond of, and loyal to, her husband, to whom she was a very good wife. She was extremely fond of her children, of whom she had three living, and to them she devoted her life.

Refusing to allow nurses to have the charge of such precious treasures, she undertook the sole care of them herself, quite giving up society, of which she had formerly been such an ornament, and in which she was still so calculated to shine. She loved horses, and drove a great deal with her children in a carriage drawn by a handsome pair of bays. A pretty picture she made as the carriage passed through the streets, and all eyes turned to look at her.

She was now about twenty-seven, and was expecting another baby daily, when the three children took the scarlatina. My sister sat up

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night and day with them, and gave herself no rest. Feeling the fatigue would prove too much for her, and fearing that the expected little stranger would suffer in consequence, she asked for extra assistance, to which reasonable request objections were raised.

The doctor, who had attended her on each previous occasion of childbirth, remonstrated with her husband for allowing his wife to remain in the house under such circumstances. He declared that if she took the scarlatina, and in his opinion this was inevitable, she would certainly die, and he entreated him to exert his marital authority to induce her to leave the house. Her husband, getting very much annoyed by the doctor's interference, informed him curtly that his wife should not quit the house with *his* consent; moreover, he would know where to find another doctor, and summarily dismissed the kind and anxious old man.

Thus my poor sister met her hour of trouble attended by a stranger. As foretold by the old doctor, she caught the infectious disease. In her exhausted condition she rapidly sank after the birth of a girl, who survived.

We will draw a veil over the husband's terrible remorse and anguish, for which even his worst enemies pitied him, as he hung over the dead

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body of his late loving wife, his young and lovely helpmeet, who had sacrificed so much for his sake. We will also draw a veil over my deep sorrow for the loss of a loved and favourite sister. I registered a vow to myself that never, never would I forgive the man to whose instrumentality I considered that sister's death was due.

Let us hold sacred, too, the frantic grief of the poor mother, far away in America, as she recalled only the engaging ways and amiable disposition of her daughter, quite forgetting her faults, or the undutiful conduct she had been led into, through her trusting and affectionate character, for love of a clever and seductive man.

I shall now turn to Delia, whom it looks I have almost forgotten. For long she kept the promise anent the relinquishment of her riding, but after many years she began to miss the exhilarating pastime more and more.

At length she came to the conclusion that life was not worth having without horse exercise. She therefore begged her husband to reconsider his decision, and allow her to resume her riding. When, in spite of her pleading and entreaties, he still refused, she determined on carrying out a desperate and sinful resolution, which, strengthened by the other miseries of her

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existence, had for some time been forming itself in her mind.

A younger sister was then staying on a visit at St. Germains. One night she was awakened from her sleep by the apparition of Delia, whose pale face rivalled the whiteness of her dressing-gown.

"Anna," she wailed, "I have just taken a dose of poison, because I am so unhappy, and now I am sorry. I want to live. What shall I do? Oh! what shall I do?"

Anna started up, and, speechless from horror, hurried to Mr. Thomson's room, shook him roughly, and told him to go at once for a doctor, as Delia had taken poison.

Mr. Thomson, on being made to comprehend the shocking tidings, jumped out of bed, dressed hastily, and obeyed his sister-in-law's command. Thanks to his promptitude in the observance of her directions, Delia's life was saved. Her husband, taking warning from the fright he had received, never again prohibited his wife the indulgence of her favourite recreation, but permitted her to ride to her heart's content. For the future Delia was to be seen daily scouring the country for hours on a three-hundred-guinea mare, accompanied by her son on a bicycle. In consequence of this boy having a slight delicacy

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of the spine, the doctors had forbidden him the more violent exercise of horse-riding. So Delia had now a few years of enjoyment and freedom in the companionship of her only son, between whom and his mother a warm attachment existed. Delia, being of a very undemonstrative and of an apparently cold temperament, some, with the usual want of judgment of people who don't understand, said that she did not care for her son. Which charitable verdict after events proved wrong.

Whilst his sister Delia was rejoicing in, and profiting, by her hardly gained liberty, Charles was making a name which rang from one end of the world to the other. It is not my intention to relate his public career, which has already been written upon by several better able to describe it than I am, and which, in any case, could only be more or less a repetition of what has previously been stated.

The Kilmainham episode is, perhaps, a solitary incident pertaining to his political life, wherein I had more opportunities of witnessing his sufferings, and certain events of his sojourn there, than any outsider could possibly have had. Therefore, it may be interesting to give a brief sketch of this part of his career as a public character.

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Charles was arrested as a "Suspect" at Morrison's Hotel in Dublin.

Having a few days previously received a telegram from one of his colleagues, telling him "to look out for squalls," and understanding the significance of the message, he could, had he chosen, have evaded arrest by leaving the country, but this he scorned to do.

He had spent the day before at Avondale, where I was staying with my little daughter and a friend, Mr. James C——. He had dined with me and my guest, intending to proceed to Dublin by the late train, and to return to Avondale in a couple of days.

He looked pale, was rather silent, and seemed thoughtful and preoccupied. When starting for the train, his little niece, of whom he was very fond, told him "to be sure and come back soon." The next morning, whilst he was still in bed, the officers of the law entered the hotel in order to execute the warrant they held for his arrest. He was transferred in a cab to Kilmainham.

The news spread like wildfire, and it was reported that Gladstone, on first hearing it, "threw up his hat with delight."

I heard the intelligence as my daughter and Mr. James C—— and I were on our way

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driving to Aughavanagh, Charles's shooting-lodge in the mountains, where we had arranged to have a picnic.

This contemplated diversion was now abandoned, and we returned to the house to find all the fires out and everything very desolate. The faithful old housekeeper, who had been there for many years, and who worshipped her master, was too overwhelmed with grief by the news to attend to such mundane affairs, and was, indeed, quite incapacitated to do anything, except to weep. This she did enough for herself and every one else.

On receiving a telegram "to send him some clean linen," she, however, roused herself sufficiently to look after her master's wants.

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CHAPTER VIII

KILMAINHAM

"Oh, the soul keeps its youth,
But the body faints sore; it is tired in the race,
It sinks in the chariot ere reaching the goal."
—E. B. Browning.

Charles had been a week in Kilmainham before I was able to pay my first visit there, the formalities being endless which had to be undergone to enable me to obtain a formal permission for a private visit. Brick and stone and iron bars everywhere, and the ordinary sounds of life caught tone from their environment. Even the sunlight was pierced by iron bars, and stole in distorted refractions to the most secluded spots, as though afraid. For it was a jail. The place was like some cold city belonging to another world, of wonderful cleanliness, precision, and order, in which one day was exactly the counterpart of the day that went before it. This fearful monotony was stamped upon every wall and window; upon every ceiling above, every flagstone below. And in this brick and stone, with mighty locks, bolts, and bars, between himself and freedom, was Charles Stewart Parnell.

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I found him in the best room which the prison afforded. He was sitting in an arm-chair, by a bright, glowing fire, absorbed in a book. He looked paler and thinner, his eyes were heavy, and it was evident that the confinement, deprivation of his liberty, and the want of fresh air, were even at this early date beginning to tell on his health and strength. I had imagined him on prison diet, and was relieved to find that he was allowed, in common with the rest of the "Suspects," to have anything he liked to eat and drink—of course, at his own expense. I was also glad to hear that he and his companions in misfortune could play football, or indulge in any other recreation they preferred, and as much as they chose, in an enormous, well-ventilated hall, which had a balcony all round, and resembled an opera-house, minus the seats.

After the first visit, I experienced no further difficulty in getting leave for future private visits, and I constantly called to see and to try and cheer my brother. I could not fail to perceive the change for the worse in his appearance, which each time was more and more apparent.

It was the rule to search the bags or muffs of every visitor who carried such articles, both on entering and leaving. For some reason I was made an exception, and no one asked to

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examine any parcels or bags I might chance to have with me. The utmost confidence seemed to be placed in me by the governor, who was very courteous and kind; so I had quite the run of the prison, and soon became at home there.

All the "Suspects" of a certain class dined together in Charles's room every evening, and they were allowed free access to one another's apartments during the day.

Notwithstanding so much licence, to one in Charles's position, accustomed to the luxuries of Avondale, life in Kilmainham, even under such comparatively easy circumstances, was very severe, and it was always remembered as the most trying time he had passed.

The six months he was condemned to spend within the gloomy precincts of the prison shook his constitution and undermined his health to such an extent that he never recovered the injurious effects of his imprisonment, but was ever after extremely delicate and subject to divers ailments and illnesses.

All letters written or received by the "Suspects" were opened and read by the governor. Faithless to, and taking advantage of, the trust reposed in me, my sole anxiety being to help my brother, I offered to post any letters or papers for Charles

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he liked, and I was the only one who had opportunities of conveying letters in and out which were unread, without meeting with any interference.

Charles, who was much too chivalrous to let me encounter the risk of entailing on myself the unpleasantness, and perhaps worse, which the possible discovery of such a proceeding might involve, refused to avail himself of my offer.

He was very anxious once to have a particular letter posted unseen by the governor, and rashly offered the warder a sovereign to post it without his knowledge. The warder, instead of doing so, immediately informed the governor of Charles's attempted bribe, thereby bringing on him a week of solitary confinement and stricter surveillance. It was some time before even I was permitted any more private interviews.

After five months of prison, Charles got leave *en parole* to attend his nephew Richard Thomson's funeral at Paris.

He stayed there a fortnight endeavouring to console his broken-hearted sister, whose grief for the rather sudden death, from typhus fever, of her only son, who had just reached the age of twenty-one, was a surprise to those who had credited her with "heartlessness." Delia

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Thomson did not long survive her son's death. She never rode again; gave up all society; always wore the deepest black, a colour she had hitherto detested; and finally fretted herself into an untimely grave. A month after his return to Kilmainham, Charles was released, and proceeded to Avondale, where he stayed for a while, hoping to recruit his shattered health, which was never the same again as it had been prior to his incarceration.

Even from the standpoint of the Government, this imprisonment was a mistake, and calculated rather to foster and cherish the movement it was intended to check. The emotional and chivalrous Celtic character, always given to espouse lost causes and worship martyred heroes, was fired with enthusiasm for the Nationalist movement, when it was once persecuted. The imprisoned leader became a greater hero than ever, and in spite of the loss of his personal influence, the movement grew and flourished. The fact of his suffering for the cause, and the very rigour of the Act under which he was arrested and committed as a "Suspect," strengthened and enhanced his influence as a leader of the national party in the next few years of his public life. During this time Charles frequently held large gatherings of his

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colleagues at Avondale to discuss the affairs of the nation. The discussions usually took place at night after dinner. We dined in the library, our usual sitting-room, and on the conclusion of the meal I generally lay down on the sofa. This was when I was living at Avondale. The first night one of these conferences was to be held, I proceeded to settle myself on the sofa according to my custom, but Mr. Michael Davitt, as spokesman for the rest, objected to my presence, and suggested that I should leave the room. Charles, however, objected, and said I was to remain where I was, adding, on perceiving the consternation depicted on the faces of Mr. Michael Davitt and the others, for their consolation, that "I was quite safe." Thereupon, closing my eyes, I feigned sleep, but I did not sleep, and heard all that passed. I shall not make any revelations of these private confabulations, for although he is dead I still consider myself bound in honour to verify and support my brother's statement that "I was quite safe." Anything I *could* reveal, however, would only reflect credit on Charles, who held his followers in leash. We will now go back a few years in order to give an account of Charles's love affair and engagement to an American girl,

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which shows how his entrance into a parliamentary political career had its origin in a woman.

The scene opens in New York, in one of the fine houses in Fifth Avenue.

Charles, a slender and very handsome, dark-eyed young man of twenty-three, looking slighter and handsomer than ever in evening clothes, was engaged talking to his hostess, Mrs. Forbes, when his attention was attracted by a strikingly beautiful girl, of superb and queenly carriage, dressed with the taste which Americans alone possess.

She was standing near, a ring of admirers around her, all pleading for her favour and competing for her smiles, whilst she conversed with and entertained them with infinite tact and cleverness.

Coil upon coil of rich masses of chestnut auburn hair, piled high up on top of a small and shapely head; large slumberous eyes of varying colour, now dark as night and now of a golden hazel, which scintillated and flashed with every change of feeling which her expressive countenance instantly betrayed; a skin beautifully fair, and a figure perfect in its grace and its maturity of development, rendered her a distraction from head to foot.

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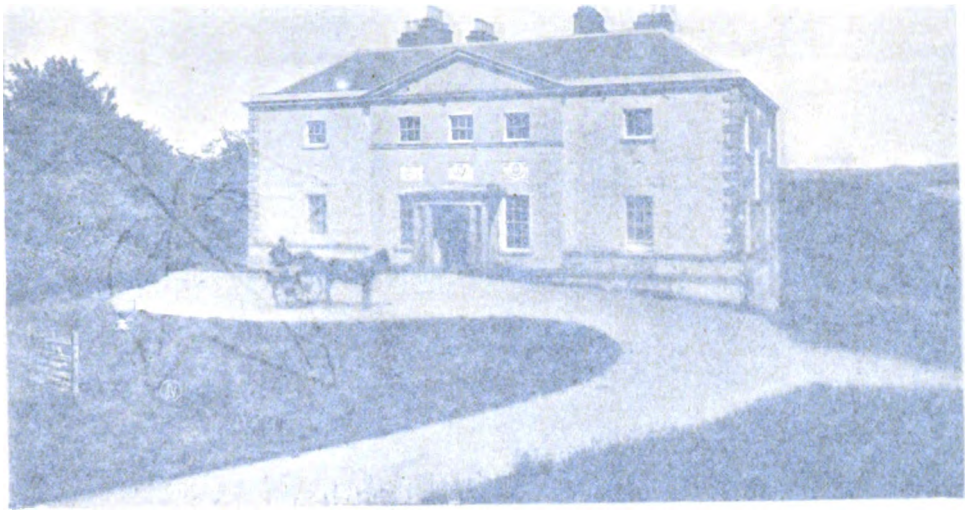

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AVONDALE, THE HOME OF CHARLES STEWART PARNELL.

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"Mrs. Forbes," asked Charles as he gazed at this vision of loveliness, "who is the young lady in black and gold, surrounded by all those men?"

"A Miss H——, an only daughter and a very rich heiress."

"And, like the gods, divinely tall and most divinely fair," muttered Charles. Then aloud and eagerly to his hostess: "Pray introduce me." Mrs. Forbes at once complied with his request. The capricious beauty thereupon dismissed her admirers and proceeded to concentrate her wit and attention on her latest conquest. Long before the conclusion of the party Charles was completely subjugated, and his heart had gone, never to return to its rightful owner again.

The intimacy between him and the bewitching American increased and throve apace amidst the congenial society and in the unconstrained sociability of New York.

In accordance with the charmingly sensible laws of American etiquette, Charlie's intercourse with his fair *inamorata* was unrestricted by the presence and *gêne* of a chaperon, an unknown article in the social life of the New World, so they were at liberty to roam about together in an enchanting dual solitude.

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After a couple of months of this delightful freedom, Miss H—— suddenly tired of America and American ways, and decided on trying "fresh fields and pastures new."

She selected Rome as the scene of her future enterprises, and accordingly one day departed thither with five or six boxes, leaving many broken hearts behind as mementoes of her stay.

For Charles the world had become grey, and life was dull, flat, and unprofitable. Her absence changed light into darkness, happiness into a dreary aching void. He struggled on for three whole days, then followed his divinity to Rome.

Before many weeks had passed he had proposed and been accepted, and it was soon known that the attractive young Irishman was engaged to the late belle of New York, and heiress of the rich Mr. H——.

The months that succeeded were perhaps the happiest of Charles's life. It seemed to him that there was a great burst of sunlight across the world, and that the world itself had suddenly grown many coloured and a place of joys. Life was bathed in an untold glory. That summer contained the great romance of his life. Basking in the charms and reciprocated love of his adored siren, whom he loved with every fibre

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of his being, with every throb of his heart, ecstasy running through his veins like quicksilver at the touch of her hand, he experienced for a brief space the delights of a "heaven upon earth." Alas! too soon was his dream of bliss dispelled by a rough awakening from his delirium of enchantment.

One memorable day the idol of his life coolly informed him she had changed her mind, and would not marry him, because he had no name. "No name, Pearl! why I have one of the oldest in Ireland," ejaculated Charles, astonished.

"Oh! I mean you have never distinguished yourself in any way. The man I marry must be a hero, and be able to boast of a self-made name, one that all the world has heard of, and that rings with his fame—not a musty old Irish name belonging to some antediluvian mouldy old family of bygone generations."

"I am very young, Pearl; give me a little time, and I will make a name that even you will be proud of; only give me time. Will you marry me then, Pearl? when I come and lay a name worthy even of your acceptance at your feet? My love, don't say me nay, don't break my heart; give me hope in the future, and an object for which to live and work,"

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pleaded Charles, with all the fervour of which he was capable, the true love of his great nature betraying itself in his anxiety to gain Pearl's consent to his request.

His eloquence met with its reward; Pearl capitulated, and promised to do what her lover had asked, and to wait for him meanwhile. So they parted, she to return to a life of gaiety and incense of admiration in America. Charles returned to Ireland, to throw himself with all the ardour of his temperament into a public political career, whereby he vowed an inward vow that he would make a name which would not prove unworthy even of his idolised Pearl.

Meetings for the future were not frequent between the lovers. Pearl remained in America, with admirers thick as leaves around her; and Charles was too much bent on achieving his goal, and on compassing the future he had set before him, to lose any time he could help by absence from the scene of his exertions.

The comparatively short time that elapsed ere his name was heard through the length and breadth of the United Kingdom, and far and wide, is well known, and how, long before reaching the prime of life, the name of "Charles

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Stewart Parnell" was on every lip. Pearl heard of his many triumphs and marvellous success, how he was a man who could hold men by the glow of his eye, the cool defiance of his carriage, and mould the world of politics and direct great forces.

Her heart glowed with pride and pleasure.

One day, on Charles's arrival in New York, he hurried to the presence of his goddess, and, laying his "name" at her feet, asked would she marry him now. "Yes," was the reply, as Pearl, proud and happy, yielded to her lover's entreaty, and consented to become his wife in three months from that date.

After a few days of bliss, Charles again returned to his arduous work in Ireland. Nine weeks passed quickly.

Pearl, that star for which Charles had sighed for so long, was within his reach, and he looked forward to calling his beloved his own, his wife. He was on the point of starting for America, where their nuptials were to be celebrated, when — but how write about, how describe, the bolt that fell with unrelenting force on Charles's head? How portray the indescribable anguish, the sharp agony, the despair contained in an innocent-looking tele-

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gram, placed in Charles's hand by an obsequious waiter on the eve of his departure? We can but picture him in his agony and passion, in his mad despair. He had loved her with all the strength of his strong nature. This ill-omened message announced the marriage of his inconstant *fiancée* to another.

The blow thus dealt him harshly and summarily bade fair at first to change and sour his affectionate disposition, but in time the innate nobility of his nature conquered. He rose superior to his trouble and the deadening influence of a rejected love. He did not even give his feelings vent by railing at and abusing all women, as so many under similar circumstances do.

He came forth strengthened and ennobled by the fiery trial through which he had passed, but he never loved again.

From henceforth he bestowed all his affection on his country. On the amelioration of its wrongs he centred all his attention. The work which he had first undertaken for love of a woman he afterwards continued with unabated ardour from patriotic feeling, and for love of the nation whose cause he had espoused with Spartan courage, though many believed it

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to be a forlorn hope. So true it is that it is an "ill wind that blows nobody any good."

Thus Ireland, for the devotion and sacrifice of Charles's life and all benefits derived therefrom, had to thank the faithlessness and fickleness of a woman!

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CHAPTER IX

COLONEL H——

"The falcon has the eyes of the dove.
Ah love!
Perjured, false, treacherous love."
—LONGFELLOW.

My mother, after her brother's death, had taken up her residence in America, where her newly-acquired property demanded her presence and attention.

She was accompanied thither by her three younger daughters, Fanny, Anna, and Theodosia. Anna returned to Ireland in about a year, Theodosia married a navy man, and Fanny remained as her mother's companion and help. Fanny, when last mentioned, was about going to Lady Howard's for a London season, but in a month after her arrival her visit was cut short by the sudden death of her aunt. Sir Ralph followed his better half a few years later. Much to his nieces' gratification, though greatly grieved by this loss, they found that Sir Ralph had not forgotten their future, and had left all, including me, handsome legacies.

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Fanny became extremely popular at my mother's conntry place, Ironsides, in New Jersey, and beloved by all, especially the poor. Having a wider grasp of political matters than most girls of her age, and being a very ardent patriot, she took a deep interest in her brother's politics, which were also hers.

Her feelings towards, and love for, Ireland found expression in poetry, of which she wrote a great deal. Several of her poems were published. The climate of New Jersey disagreed with her, and her health declined in consequence. She suffered severely from the malaria of the country, which induced rheumatic fever, that left the seeds of heart disease. Being naturally brave and of an unselfish nature, her friends were ignorant of the hold that the disease had got upon her, especially as she went through her ordinary routine of daily duties, held her head high, and greeted the world with a smile of courage. Her death afterwards at an early age was therefore unexpected. She was very much lamented and missed by all who knew her, and particularly by her poor people, but most of all by her mother, who was now left alone.

John Howard Parnell, who had some years before gone to America to seek his fortune, was meanwhile having a rough time of it down south.

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He has not yet had much part in this story. Like his brother Charles, he was tall and dark and aristocratic looking, but there all resemblance ceased.

In his love for rural pursuits, being very fond of flowers, he differed from his brother, whose bent lay more in the fields of literature and science. In his taste for geology John was a veritable Hugh Miller. He had also inherited a remarkable talent for painting from some remote ancestor. John went in for fruit-growing in America very extensively, of which industry he had a great deal of knowledge, and his peaches obtained a far-famed distinction.

Henry Parnell had married, and turned to housekeeping and superintending babies, which he varied by mountain climbing.

Having thus shortly disposed of the different living members of the family, I shall now return to myself and my ever-increasing perplexities.

Only that these are facts, the temptation to skip the following portion might prove irresistible. Being true, it must be given in all its baldness.

A crisis had arrived in my life which it would be hard to define or explain. It originated in my meeting with a Colonel H——, who

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had been introduced to me by Arthur, of whom he was an old army friend, but who had also retired.

Colonel H—— was an extremely handsome man, now in his prime. He was also, to use a vulgar expression, an inveterate "lady-killer." Possessed of most insinuating manners and address, and a handsome face and figure, he had been accustomed all his life to find the fair sex comparatively easy victims. With him and me it was on both sides a case of love at first sight.

On my part it was quite a different love to what I had felt, and still felt for Arthur, which partook now largely of the maternal, for poor Arthur had come to lean on me like a child, and my feelings for Colonel H—— in no way interfered with it.

I had probably been too young at the time of my engagement to Arthur to love with the passion, latent in every woman, of later years. My love for Arthur had always been marked by its purity and innocence, otherwise ignorance, which usually pervades first and early love. The love that comes with maturer years is of quite a different sort, less of purity and more of passion —in fact, an inferior article altogether; but better adapted to man, who is not made to mate with angels.

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It is probable, that only for the peculiar circumstances of my life with Arthur, my thoughts and affections would not have strayed, even temporarily. Be that as it may, the love that sprang up between Colonel H—— and me was as violent as it was hopeless.

One of those rare passions, all absorbing, blind and deaf to everything but itself, a wild storm now rising high in a whirlwind of passion, now sinking into a treacherous calm.

An alternate delirium of rapture and despair, which while it steeps the mind for a brief space in paradise, leaves a bitter taste in the mouth.

As there is no higher stimulus to love or passion than the fact that the coveted one belongs to some one else, Colonel H—— was completely carried away by his feelings, which overpowered reason, sense, and every other consideration. He moved heaven and earth to gain his object, if not by fair means, by foul, and was as much surprised as irritated by the fierce resistance which he met with, and which incited him to still more extreme measures to get his own way.

But the woman who hesitates is *saved*.

It was the old story; prudence and inclination striving for the mastery, self-respect and passion

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at war. My will proved conqueror. I emerged a winner, though feeling that my victory had been dearly purchased.

One day, when walking in St. Stephen's Green, I was joined by Colonel H——. It was the early afternoon. The colonel wished to unfold his plan of campaign. "My dearest," he commenced, "how long are we to go on like this? Platonics are not in my line. I don't believe in them between man and woman. Sue for a divorce, and I swear, by all that is most sacred, that as soon as the necessary time which the law demands has elapsed, I will then, with your consent, marry you myself."

"I cannot, Cecil," I murmured in low tones.

"You would only have to ask for it to get it. He wouldn't have a leg to stand on. Darling, don't you love me? You couldn't look me in the face, and tell me you don't. I know you do. Think how happy we would be together. I would never allow you to regret having taken such a step. It would be my sole object to make you happy. You should never have a wish ungratified. I feel as if I would give all the world for you. I never loved a woman as I love you. I cannot live without you."

"Don't urge me," I implored, tears in my eyes. "I couldn't do as you ask. Poor Arthur! I

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should never forgive myself if I deserted him now. But, Cecil, it hurts me to refuse you."

"Well then," impatiently, "let appearances be against yourself, and let the divorce proceedings come from the other side."

I was confounded by the audacity of this proposal, and was silent.

"We will leave some evening in the same boat from Kingstown," continued Colonel H——, mistaking my silence as a favourable sign, "and if you wish we will part at Holyhead. The mere fact of our leaving together would be amply sufficient grounds for a divorce action on Arthur's part. This need *not* be defended, and so, from appearances only" (he dwelt particularly on this), "you can obtain your freedom, and we can be married."

I secretly thought it would require much stronger evidence than merely leaving Kingstown in the same boat with Colonel H—— to make Arthur go in for divorce proceedings. To try him, I asked him one evening, shortly after I had finally broken with the Colonel, whether he would believe it if somebody told him bad things about me. "Believe it? No!" Arthur said. "I shouldn't believe it; but the man or woman who came to me with such tales had better say their prayers first, for he

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or she would never get another chance of saying them." I thought this such a "manly" answer. Strange to say, Arthur remained ignorant of the tittle-tattle concerning me and Colonel H——; but having regard to his manner of life at this time, perhaps this was not so surprising.

Having recovered my power of speech, and declining to meet the Colonel's wishes by the adoption of such a Machiavellian method, which would be so detrimental to my good name, we parted in discord, in a scene of violent reproach and recrimination on the part of Colonel H——, who declared that women were veritable devils, "cold, merciless, and unreliable." I experienced a totally new and most unpleasant feeling of lessened self-respect and condemnation. I longed for the strength to be able to dismiss this man from my presence, who dared insult me with such preposterous propositions, and refuse once for all ever to see him again—to be less under his sway and magnetism. I would ask myself indignantly what witchcraft had made me the slave of an unworthy man.

Yet, even when my strong will seemed about to gain the ascendancy, a wave of feeling would shake my good resolutions to the wind, and leave me weaker than before. Colonel H——'s

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unceasing and unconcealed attentions to and hot pursuit of me had not passed unnoticed. Several people had remarked and passed comments on what at first they thought was only a flirtation; but soon Colonel H——'s open and reckless avowal of his infatuation and intentions left no longer room for doubt upon the subject. The affair began to assume a graver aspect in the minds of many.

The prevailing rumours had reached Mr. L——'s ears, and slow as he was to give credence to reports detrimental to the woman he had set on a pedestal, a certain jealous instinct, in this particular instance, shook even his boundless faith and confidence.

As usual, it was not so much of himself he thought as of me, and the best way to exercise his protective powers so as to help me in this portentous crisis of my life.

Perhaps the plan he adopted with a view to saving me was a mistake—indeed the result proved it so; but much must be excused to one who loved so truly and unselfishly as he did.

He was paying, according to his custom, his daily visit, and boldly introduced the name of Colonel H——. He commented on the talk to which his constant attendance on me had given rise. "The clubs are full of it," he said;

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"you may imagine how painful it is to me to hear your name bandied about, and to be obliged to listen to base insinuations of one whom I thought the purest creature on God's earth. I don't wish to say anything about myself or my own feelings, but as you value your future and that of your child, I entreat you to pause on the edge of the precipice on which you stand. Moreover," he added, "I have been informed on indisputable authority that Colonel H—— has been heard to boast publicly at his club of 'his conquest' as he calls it." As he expected, this was more than enough to raise the pride and hurt the self-esteem of any woman, but especially of so proud a one as I was.

My indignation and outraged feelings turned, as Mr. L—— meant they should, against the man whom I believed to have taken such an unfair and dastardly advantage of my friendly relations with him, and who, I told myself, was too utterly vile and contemptible for any further feeling on my part, except that of dislike and aversion. "I shall never speak to him again," I declared impulsively, and much to Mr. L——'s delight; "that is," I corrected, "except to tell him I have heard he has been boasting about me."

"No, don't tell him that, and don't see him any more, but quietly drop his acquaintance."

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"I don't mind so much what people say. They are always too ready to put wrong constructions on innocent actions, but I could never have anything again to do with Colonel H—— if he has talked about me at his club in the way you say he has."

Mr. L—— being a man of unimpeachable truth and honesty, I never doubted for a moment the veracity of his statement.

"Well, dismiss him firmly, but it's not necessary to give him any reason or explanation," urged Mr. L—— emphatically.

"I shall certainly send him about his business," I repeated, but was silent on the subject of the other condition.

"God bless you," Mr. L—— concluded, as he rose to go, "and give you strength to adhere to your good resolution. I would rather see you in your coffin than see you unable to hold that proud little head I have loved so well as high as ever. You know I have always placed you on a pedestal, and I want to keep you there."

"I don't wish to be put on a pedestal," I retorted, my temper being up. "It is very dull sitting on a pedestal."

I listened to his retreating steps, then in hot and feverish haste I sought my alleged

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calumniator, and hurled my accusation fiercely on his head, revealing in my rage the name of my informant.

Colonel H——, struck dumb at first with surprise, hotly denied the accusation, then swearing he would not rest until he had proved his innocence of such a libel, he departed in furious wrath to write a challenge to Mr. L——. However, before posting it, he showed the letter to a mutual friend of his and mine, who wisely persuaded him, instead of putting it in the post, to commit it to the flames.

He next proceeded to collect evidence with reference to the falsity of the dastardly act imputed to him. In this he succeeded, for a large number of members of the club declared their willingness to come forward to give their testimony to the fact that he had never been heard to mention my name except in terms of respect. He made no secret, though, of being madly in love with me.

The matter terminated in a contrite confession on the part of Mr. L—— that he had purposely invented the tale in order to alienate me from Colonel H——. Instead of this it had a contrary effect. In my remorse and regret for having believed him capable of such meanness, I was inclined to err on the

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side of exaggerated self-reproach, and to unduly exalt the man, who, in this case at least, had been wrongly accused.

The position of things remained unaltered for a while longer. I still struggled vainly to overcome my madness, and made resolutions never again to see the object of it, which were only to be broken the next interview by Colonel H——'s passionate protestations and entreaties not to banish him completely from my presence.

Though months would pass without a meeting, the rapture and ecstasy we both felt when we met again proved how vain had been the experiment of absence to kill or even to lessen our mutual infatuation; but on the contrary, it had only served to strengthen it.

The relations between us, however, could not continue for ever on these lines.

Colonel H——, having tried all other methods to attain his object, merely to find himself balked, at length lost patience.

As a last resource, he informed me that I must choose finally between him and complete severance, as he was too fond of me to continue any longer to meet me on our present platonic terms. He must have all or

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nothing, he said. He believed, in his self-conceit, this would clinch the matter, and bring it to the termination he desired, for he thought I loved him too well to let him go out of my life altogether. Much to his surprise and vexation I did, and even insisted on his keeping to the ultimatum he had himself proposed. Finding he was taken at his word, he would fain have retracted his self-imposed sentence of banishment.

It had needed only this spur to enable me to maintain my firmness in adhering to the right course of action, and to part for ever from a man who had acquired such an extraordinary influence over me as to have succeeded, even to the extent he had, in tempting me from the straight path, and causing an inexplicable lapse in an otherwise (on that score) irreproachable life.

I kept to my decision, and Colonel H—— and I never met again. In the steady perseverance of a good resolve strength was given me, and in time my mad infatuation ceased to exist, as though it had never been. Passion is not love, nor fleeting desire undying devotion.

A few years later I heard of Colonel H——'s death, and rejoiced as well as wondered at my indifference to the news.

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Certain shady transactions on his part having transpired afterwards, I congratulated myself more and more on my escape from an unscrupulous man.

If girls and women only knew the real character of these fascinating and too often irresistible "Don Juans," perhaps they would pause before delivering themselves over to their tender mercies. Though for their sakes they are ready to sacrifice themselves, their relations and friends, they only find in the end what fools they have been, and are scorned by the very men for whom they have sacrificed all that a woman holds most dear. Too late they rue in sackcloth and ashes the bitter penalties of sin and weakness, of which not the least is the loss of the strong tower of self-respect, that once lost can never be regained, and bereft of it either man or woman is like a ship without a rudder, which is eventually broken in pieces on the rocks.

We should therefore endeavour, at all costs, to preserve this most precious and priceless possession, so that we may try and steer clear of the many shoals and pitfalls of life which must necessarily meet and impede our footsteps through a world full of difficulties and alluring temptations, especially for the young and un-

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wary. We are all only imperfect human beings, as it is intended we should be, and it is not for us to judge one another, fond as we are of doing so. We may not all have exactly the same faults, but though we may be free from the more conspicuous misdemeanours of our neighbours, it does not follow that we are not guilty of others quite as bad, or worse. So in our judgment of others, if judge others we must, let us be more charitable and lenient, remembering that those who live in glass houses should not throw stones.

As it has been, so it always will be, in spite of the modern strongmindedness of the "new woman," who, notwithstanding her mannish and independent ways, will find, sooner or later, that after all she is a woman, and consequently as liable as her weaker sister to the ordinary frailties of her sex.

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CHAPTER X

THE BROAD PATH

"Wild words wander here and there;
God's great gift of speech abused
Makes thy memory confused,
But let them rave."

—TENNYSON.

AFTER emerging from Kilmainham, Charles was more idolised by the people, on whose account he had suffered such privations and sacrificed his health, than ever. Their gratitude was demonstrated by a substantial testimonial, intended for the purpose of freeing his estate from the mortgages with which he had saddled Avondale, in order to raise money to carry on "The Cause." Forty thousand pounds was subscribed by a grateful nation for this object.

Charles devoted his time and brains with unabated energy to the welfare of his country, and towards the broader tenets of socialism, putting his shattered health on one side as of no account. As the years passed, each one fuller of brilliant success than the last, and just when he was at the height of his success,

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whispers began to circulate faintly with reference to an intrigue on Charles's part with a married woman.

As yet no publicity was given to the affair, which his supporters derided as due to the machinations of his enemies, to calumniate for their own ends the character of their leader.

Unfortunately this was not the case, as after events proved. There was only too good ground for the rumours, which many would fain have believed to be merely scandalous reports, especially as Charles had recently been so well able to give the lie to the villainous attempt to stigmatise him as a murderer, and his triumphant refutation of the hideous crime imputed to him had raised him to the pinnacle of the pedestal on which his followers had placed him.

Very little is known about the real facts of the regrettable "mistake" which afterwards proved to be the rock on which he split, otherwise he might have been judged more leniently. Had he been less chivalrous in his dealings with women, or had gratitude been a lesser adjunct in his disposition, he might not have so completely immolated himself at a woman's shrine as he did. An instance of his chivalrous disposition towards women may here be given.

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It was the occasion of a great ball in Dublin. Charles wished to present a lady of his acquaintance with a bouquet. He searched all Dublin over, but failed to find a bouquet which he considered good enough to offer to a lady. "Well, Charles," asked Arthur when Charles returned from his fruitless quest, "have you got the bouquet?" "No," he replied, "in the whole of Dublin I didn't see one fit to present to a lady, and I would rather not give one at all than insult a lady by offering her one that's not worthy of her acceptance. A man should only offer a woman the very best." It may also here be stated that Charles in one respect was not Irish, for he never forgot a kindness.

Charles first met the lady for whom he later on sacrificed all the hardly-won fame and success of years, even his popularity, his ambition, and life itself, at Lady K——'s. The latter had sent him an invitation to dinner a few days previously, but Charles, who was very absent-minded with respect to social functions, and unconventional in the extreme, had forgotten the right date of the party. He therefore turned up a couple of evenings afterwards an hour before the time. Lady K——, glad to have him on any terms, did not undeceive

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him as to his error, but hastily sent off several notes explaining the situation, and asking some of her most intimate friends to help her in her emergency. She begged they would excuse the shortness of the notice, and come to dine that evening. She also ordered a hastily improvised dinner from a near caterer's.

Amongst the guests was Mrs. O'Shea, who was then considered very pretty, and fascinating to a degree. About ten years Charles's senior, she was still in her prime. With her it appears to have been a case of love at first sight. In her infatuation for the attractive and distinguished young Irish leader, who was generally regarded as so unapproachable, and icily indifferent to the blandishments of the fair sex, she seems to have forgotten all ordinary caution, and to have acted from the beginning with the *abandon* of one who considers the world well lost for love. At first, and for long, Charles was as adamant to the fascinations of the charmer. Once he even placed the ocean between himself and temptation, but adverse fate played into the hands of the woman who so madly worshipped him.

The confinement and privations he had undergone in Kilmainham, which had so shaken his constitution, culminated in a severe attack of

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illness, and for many weeks his life was despaired of. Alone and at the mercy of London servants, Mrs. O'Shea, taking pity on his helplessness, constituted herself his nurse, and nursed him through the long and dangerous sickness with a zeal and with an unremitting care which love alone can prompt. Indeed, it was probably owing to her tender vigilance and good nursing that Charles's life was saved.

At all events, he himself attributed his recovery to his kind and attentive nurse, who certainly did not spare herself in his behalf. Her faithful care prevailed.

Once more, after months of illness, followed by convalescence, Charles appeared again in public life, the mere shadow of his former self. By this time he had come to feel the love born of gratitude for one to whom he considered he owed his life. The iron hand of fate was gradually weaving a snare around him which he presently was to find too strong.

Captain O'Shea suddenly objected to the terms of intimacy existing between Charles and his wife. The consequent scenes and altercations became frequent, and resulted in Mrs. O'Shea's leaving her husband's house and taking refuge with the man she loved.

Thus he entered on "the broad road that

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leadeth to destruction, the path whereof is the way to Hell, leading down to the chambers of death!"

Whilst events were moving swiftly, Arthur's career in Dublin, an ever-hastening plunge downwards, was drawing near to a conclusion. My patience was sorely tried, but I held tenaciously on in my self-appointed task of endeavouring to save my husband from the consequences of his foolishness. He was seldom or never now out of trouble. The prolonged strain began to tell very much on my health and nerves.

When Charles again, in spite of former rebuffs, tried to come to my aid, I was more willing to listen to his advice than I had been ten years previously.

I accepted his invitation to go and stop at Avondale for a few months for change and rest with my little daughter, leaving Arthur to his own devices in Dublin.

The latter, however, had not been left long to his own sweet will before he plunged deeper into troubled waters than he had yet done. On receipt of a telegram informing me of my husband's arrest for assault, I hurried up to Dublin, and succeeded in procuring him bail pending trial. I also tried to make terms with the party prosecuting, but the amount offered

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was not considered large enough, so my offer was refused.

Arthur, however, settled the difficulty by proposing to leave the country and have a change. He accordingly departed for the gay little city of Brussels.

I remained behind in order to endeavour to effect a final settlement, and pave the way for his return. My sister, Mrs. Pagett, accompanied by her husband, two big dogs as large as they make them, and a couple of horses, came over to stay at Avondale, and the summer promised to be an agreeable variety for all parties.

Then began a cheerful time—lawn tennis, riding excursions, and picnics were the order of the day, and once more the old house resounded with laughter and sounds of merriment and fun. Arthur wrote regularly twice a week, long and loving letters, and appeared to be enjoying his exile amongst new scenes and faces, which also seemed to be exercising a beneficial effect on him in other respects.

My mind was easier than it had been for years, and my health improved under exemption from grave thoughts and care. Thus the summer passed, and the days grew shorter, gloomier, and colder. Soon, when the chill

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nip of winter began to make itself felt, the hunting season commenced, and I again appeared in the fields of the scenes of my childhood's triumphs and success, which recalled with strange vividness the memory of the happy days passed with my father, when we two were so much to one another.

Now, I had to depend on the escort of a groom, and one who sometimes proved a broken reed. This man was a good groom when sober, but unhappily he was not always so, and occasionally, being too incapable to sit his horse, fell off when riding with his mistress.

On one memorable occasion I started at ten in the morning to ride to Bray, a distance of thirty miles from Avondale. James, the groom, who was under the influence of drink even at that early hour, had a fall ere we had proceeded far. Leaving him to his fate, I followed in pursuit of the runaway horse. Instead of keeping the road and a straight direction, which would have brought us to Bray in real John Gilpin style, the animal led me a run across country, terminated at length by a dexterous ploughman, who adroitly caught the thoroughbred the groom had been riding, and checked him in his mad and headlong

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course. It was dark long before I got back to Avondale with the captured horse. Then, remembering James had the key of the stables in his pocket, without which the horses could not be got in, I proceeded to the town, where the man had lodgings, on the chance of finding him there.

James, awakening to the discovery that he was lying on the road, cursing both his mistress and his steed for having deserted him, had picked himself up and found his way home.

He had gone to bed, and was enjoying the sleep of the inebriated.

When wakened up, and made to understand the key was wanting, he refused to give it, declaring that no stranger should touch the horse. After keeping me waiting whilst he dressed, he accompanied me back, grumbling at the hard treatment he had sustained, especially bewailing the barbarity which had left him on the road. He said it was a case of "save the horse" and "never mind the man," and he had known a gentleman who had got "six months" with hard labour for a similar offence.

Muttering over his grievances, and spilling the grease of the one candle over my riding-habit, he essayed to rub the horse down, whilst I stood silently watching my favourite "done

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up" and made comfortable, before seeking the much-needed rest and refreshment for myself, having been ten hours in my habit on a bitterly cold day without either eating or drinking.

After this little experience I gave James the option of leaving my service or taking the pledge. He chose the latter alternative, and for a time scrupulously kept it, giving every satisfaction. But this happy state of things was destined to be suddenly interrupted.

One morning the party was assembled at eight o'clock in the dining-room for breakfast, both ladies and gentlemen in hunting costume prior to starting for the day's sport.

James knocked at the door, and on being told to come in, entered. In plain and forcible language he informed the company in general, and me in particular, that he was too "intoxicated" to ride after me that day. He said he thought it best to let me know beforehand, as if he were to mount a horse in his condition some irremediable mischief might ensue. Moreover, like a true son of Adam, he blamed his wife for the unlucky occurrence, as she had been so inconsiderate as to present him during the night with a sixth baby, a piece of bad luck, in his opinion, which he evidently considered an ample excuse for his incapable state.

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Needless to say, this *naïve* announcement caused much amusement, and one of the gentlemen present offering his escort instead—this not being the age when ladies were strong-minded enough to ride to hounds unattended — the dilemma was settled. So the party started on their quest of pleasure. This gentleman, however, in the excitement of the sport later on in the day, forgot his promise. This want of care had an unlucky result for James's mistress. On coming to a thick wood, my horse, having already once or twice knocked me against a tree, finding himself surrounded by the same obstacles, and feeling very excited, doubtless thought I would be safer at home. He therefore denied himself his greatest pleasure, that of following the hounds, and suddenly set off homewards at full gallop, all my efforts to stop him being unavailing. Soon after this Captain and Mrs. Pagett left, and the party broke up.

Some time later, my uncle, Mr. Bligh before mentioned, died, leaving me a few thousand pounds, so I had not at present to add the want of money to my other difficulties, notwithstanding that it required much to meet Arthur's expenses. Though many blamed me, and even went so far as to say that my indis-

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criminate generosity encouraged Arthur in his reckless course, I could never forget it was for my sake he had thrown up his military career.

Now, too, I saw my way to bringing my husband's prosecutor to terms, for, like most men, he had his price, and it was only a question of money.

Whether it was the salutary effects of another sky, and freedom from the old trammels of pernicious habits and companionship, or whether it was his better nature at last attaining the ascendancy, or the grace of God in his heart, Arthur certainly seemed to be gaining the victory over the terrible vice and disease which had for so long held him captive.

For the last six months a decided and remarkable improvement had taken place in his mode of life. His letters at this time were a source of exceeding comfort, and full of hope for the future. My strenuous efforts to get the unfortunate affair which was the cause of his exile satisfactorily settled, so as to ensure him freedom to return to his native land, were ultimately rewarded with success, and I allowed myself to hope that Arthur and I might yet be happy again together in the autumn of life as we had been in the spring.

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I looked forward to a reunion with all the joyful anticipation and gladness with which I was wont to await his arrival on leave of absence in the golden days of our engagement.

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CHAPTER XI

SORROW

"Give sorrow words; the grief that does not speak
Whispers the o'er-fraught heart, and bids it break."
—SHAKSPERE.

ALL remaining obstacles to Arthur's return had been finally smoothed and squared by the all-powerful medium of "gold."

The date was fixed for the long-parted husband and wife to meet again. I was making my arrangements for leaving Avondale, in order to get the house in Dublin ready for the reception of the exile.

I had been a short time alone. The guests were gone, and, with the exception of occasional afternoon visits from neighbouring county families, the days passed uneventfully and slowly.

Mr. L——, always my devoted friend, made a point of coming down from Dublin as often as he could spare time from his official duties, especially when I seemed lonely, and would

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try to cheer me up by making me ride and walk with him.

One day in the afternoon before Christmas he found me, on arrival, looking pale and listless in the large drawing-room. This was a very unusual mood with me, as my spirits and gaiety never appeared to desert me even in the most depressing circumstances.

"Why, Mrs. Dickinson, what has happened?" was his first question, as he saw the ashy paleness of my face. "Have you had bad news from the Captain since Tuesday?" the day of his last visit.

"I have had no news whatever," I replied wearily; "that is what troubles me. He usually writes very regularly. You know I am not given to foreboding; yet a presentiment has haunted me all day that something is wrong."

Mr. L—— was no particular friend of Arthur's, but for my sake he had tried to give him the best advice, and even when that advice was not followed never uttered a word against him.

"That is nonsense," he said, after a moment's thought. "You only get fanciful and nervous with the loneliness of the house. Come out and have a gallop. After the horse's escapade

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at the hunt, a little exercise will do him good. You can put on your habit in a few minutes, and the ride will be a tonic for you."

I looked out at the wintry sunshine flecking the trees on the lawn, and yielded willingly enough. A horse and an open field were my own remedies for a fit of depression. Little did I know that my depression was caused by the telepathy of love. We both enjoyed the swift canter through the velvet-sod fields and the crisp freshness of the early winter. The country was looking lovely, and I felt the weight on my spirits lightening under the exhilaration of the keen air and my companion's cheerful conversation. Neither of us noticed a heavy rain-cloud, which, like an ill omen, burst in a harsh shower just as the avenue gates were reached, drenching both riders before we got to the hall door, where a car was waiting to convey Mr. L—— to the station, as he had to return to Dublin by the next train.

It was getting late, and after helping me to dismount he wished me good-bye, and jumping on to the car drove off.

I at once sought my room to change my damp habit. On the chest of drawers lay a telegram which had been awaiting me for a

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couple of hours. I opened it and read the few words that changed in a moment the whole current of my life, and precipitated me from the heights of anticipated happiness to the depths of misery and woe.

Brutally brief, as telegrams must be, was the yellow harbinger of desolation, which announced the sudden death of the "Capitaine Dickinson." Finding this at first almost impossible of realisation, my dazed brain slowly mastered the deadly significance of the short message. The room flew round with a terrible velocity, and with one shriek, which penetrated even to the basement, I fell, and for a while at least was oblivious to my bitter trouble.

The old housekeeper, who had rushed up on hearing the wild scream, found me lying senseless on the floor. Having tried every remedy in vain to restore consciousness, the frightened woman despatched a messenger to the steward, imploring his help in her dilemma. The steward, having a knowledge of the French language, was enabled to discover from the telegram the cause of the attack. After a time his efforts, united to those of the housekeeper's, to bring me round were effectual, only to be succeeded by repeated fits of convulsions even more alarming than the

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previous insensibility. At length exhausted nature had its way, and the steward left to send a wire to Charles. Having been divested of my wet habit, I was got to bed.

The next day brought Charles in answer to the steward's wire. He found me even more prostrated than he had been prepared to expect, an unnatural calm having superseded the more wholesome, though perhaps more painful and uncontrolled, burst of grief consequent on the first shock of hearing the news.

On seeing Charles I became feverishly anxious that he should be made acquainted with Arthur's often-expressed wish that he should be buried, when he died, at Ballinatone, a sweetly peaceful spot near Avondale, where his father already lay.

When Charles assured me that my wishes in this and every other respect should be attended to, and told me to leave all arrangements to him, I relapsed into my previous apathetic, tearless mood, unable to eat, sleep, or cry. Charles, rendered uneasy by my condition, summoned medical aid, but the science of all the physicians in the world is powerless to mend a broken heart, and no doctor, however clever, can "minister to a mind diseased."

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It was at this critical season of my life that my brother's affection shone out in full lustre. With rare tact he forebore to worry me, or to allow me to be worried, by unnecessary details. Taking everything connected with the last sad rites to the dead man on his own shoulders, he sent the steward off to Brussels, well supplied with money, and invested with authority to make all arrangements necessary for having the body brought over to Ireland as expeditiously as possible. Though there was no superfluous delay, it was a full week before these could be completed.

Meanwhile I still remained apparently insensible of all surroundings, causing those about me much anxiety, but otherwise giving no trouble.

The morning of the funeral dawned bright and frosty. There had been a slight fall of snow, which clung to the branches of the trees in feathery beauty, and icicles sparkled in the sun. It had been settled that the coffin containing poor Arthur's remains should come down for interment at Ballinatone by the morning train. Lying still and tearless, I was suddenly startled by the loud whistle heralding its approach, which sent a thrill through me like an electric shock. Suddenly recollecting that

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the dead body of my husband had arrived, and realising the manner of his home-coming, the tears so long denied me rushed forth in a torrent, and mercifully relieved the tension of my brain.

After the lapse of another week, I was able to exchange my bed for a sofa.

My wan appearance, like that of one who had been ill for months, filled every one with compassion. Charles, whose presence was urgently required elsewhere, stopped on at Avondale, insensibly comforting me by his silent and unobtrusive sympathy and calmly cheerful society. He coaxed me to eat little dainties he had himself procured for me from Dublin, and refraining from urging me to premature exertions, left me chiefly to nature's restorative powers. Under this tactful and judicious treatment, I gradually gained health and strength, and became strong enough to hear some of the particulars of Arthur's death.

It seemed the cause of his death, which it was feared had been precipitated by his late abstemiousness, was cerebral apoplexy, swift as a thunderclap. Having accustomed himself to the artificial stimulant of spirits for so long, the sudden cessation reacted on his system. The truth of the saying, "Drink ever, die never,"

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has often been exemplified in the fatal results accruing from the too sudden abstinence from stimulants, when they have been rendered necessary by habit in those who unfortunately have allowed themselves to be mastered by these most pernicious drugs.

To me it was an unspeakable satisfaction to know that Arthur had during the last few months of his life vanquished his enemy; for surely it was something more than mere change of air and scene, that had enabled him at the last to resist the habit that his life in Ireland had helped to strengthen, which the grace of God in the heart could alone have enabled him to do.

Having extended his stay at Avondale to its utmost limits, Charles was reluctantly forced to leave me, to wrestle alone in my crushing desolation with the bitterest grief I had yet known. Driven nearly frenzied with well-nigh insupportable reminiscences, living over and over again in the past, recalling the manly, impulsive, lovable qualities of my boy lover, merged afterwards into the adoring husband, the man loved by nearly all who knew him, as I remembered Arthur in his early days, my heart seemed to break under its load of accumulated sorrow.

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Piles of letters received since my affliction remained unopened. When at last I broke the seals and read them, a curious mixture of condolence and congratulations met my eyes. It was the amazing fact, that some of my so-called friends, singularly deficient in discrimination, actually had the bad taste to consider my husband's death a fitting occasion on which to pen expressions of congratulation! But it mattered nothing to me, who turned from all letters, whether of condolence or the reverse, in weariness of spirit, as well as from all visits.

So vain are even the best-meant attempts of our dearest friends to strengthen the broken and bruised reed bent under the mighty reality of a sorrow—deep and real.

Charles, actuated by motives of kindness and consideration, proposed that I should give up the Dublin house, and make my home at Avondale. I assented, for the thought of returning to the abode once shared with my husband, and full of remembrances both happy and painful, was too repugnant for contemplation, and I settled down to a solitary existence in the gloomy ancestral mansion.

By Charles's advice, who deemed it best for the child's sake, she being now of an age to

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profit by discipline and educational advantages, my daughter was sent to a boarding-school. The months that followed were passed by me in uninterrupted seclusion and monotonous isolation, and for once the great healer "Time" seemed to fail to bring any balm to my wounded heart. My mother came over for a brief visit from America, and, alarmed at my stonily apathetic and lonely condition, entreated Charles to exert his influence to induce me to travel for a while.

The evening before her departure, my mother was sitting in the drawing-room alone when Charles came in. My mother was looking anxious and careworn. "Charles," she began, "Cora should not be allowed to remain here by herself in her present state of health. She is the shadow of what she used to be. You have influence with her, and I wish you would exert it to induce her to travel."

Charles was silent. After a few minutes' meditation, he replied, "She shrinks with distaste from change of any sort. The shock has been too great, too sudden, to be mitigated by many words or sympathy. Better leave her alone. She will come round quicker if left to herself than she would if prematurely urged to exertions she is still both mentally and physically unfit for."

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"I do not agree with you," said my mother; "change would rouse her up. If she stays here she will brood and mope."

"Change of scene is not much good without change of mind. Poor Arthur! Cora was fond of him in spite of all. He had many excellent qualities to counterbalance his one great weakness, and if he had had more strength of will, his life might have been a very useful one. Believe me, mother, she is best as she is."

My mother, deferring to her son's judgment, returned to America, leaving me again to my self-imposed solitude.

Five years passed, during which, with the exception of my daughter's visits for the holidays, and Charles's short ones, which latterly had become "like angels' visits, few and far between," I saw nobody, and went nowhere. It was about this time that Charles became so engrossed with Mrs. O'Shea, and he was now completely under her sway.

Charles and I were not of the same politics. This, however, did not make us the worse friends, but perhaps rather the contrary. We agreed to differ, and by a tacit understanding, we never discussed politics when together. During his periods of sojourn at Avondale, on the long rides and drives we took together, we talked of every

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subject under the sun, except political ones. In the course of these excursions, he would often exclaim to me, "How nice it is to be with some one I can depend on not talking 'shop.' It's such a relief to escape from it for a while!" He used to enjoy these expeditions, and the choice little picnics he and I used to have together, carrying our luncheon fastened to our saddles without the presence of a third party, unless it was the groom holding our horses at a distance, with almost boyish zest, and for me they were red-letter days. It was a pleasure to watch him, though somehow mixed with a feeling of sadness, scaling a mountain with springy steps, whilst I sat down to await his return at the foot, a riding habit in those days, when worn long, not being adapted to climbing mountains.

I continued to lead my calm and uneventful life, wandering alone through the empty rooms of the big and dreary house, in robes of deepest black, like a dark and melancholy spirit, and riding for hours in order to secure, by physical exhaustion, sleep at night.

At last, an invasion of my solitude was threatened by Mr. L——, who wrote, proposing himself as my guest for a couple of days, and remembering all his former kind-

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ness and goodness in my hour of need, I responded by sending him a warm invitation to come and share my quiet existence for a few days, promising him a hearty welcome and a cordial reception.

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CHAPTER XII

FAITHFUL LOVE

"Because I love thee I obtain
From that same love this vindicating grace,
To live on still in love, and yet in vain,
To bless thee, yet renounce thee to thy face."
—E. B. Browning.

Mr. L——, respecting my deep sorrow, had, since Arthur's death, refrained from troubling me with his own feelings or hopes, trusting that the softening influence of time would some day enable him to plead his cause and ask for his reward. Without appearing unduly obtrusive or selfish, it seemed to him that the time had now arrived when he might put his fate to the test.

He eagerly availed himself of the chance, offered by a week under the same roof as his idol, to further the progress of his suit. He reached Avondale one glorious evening in the gold and crimson beauty of late autumn, when the trees were changing their summer hue of verdant green for a mixture of rich autumnal tints, and the rooks were having their usual evening concert before retiring to rest.

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I had not yet discarded my sable garments. My black dress, falling in graceful folds, accentuated the slenderness of my figure. Mr. L——, as he gazed at my face, to which grief had added an expression of sadness which, in his opinion, rendered it more attractive than ever, felt that, if he could persuade me to give my future into his keeping, it would be his one object to make the remainder of my life so smoothly content that I would in time regain a measure of happiness, and that the trials of the past would gradually fade into a sort of distant dream. As to the answer he would receive he was not sure, though, with the proverbial vanity of men, and forgetting that with some there is no rival so strong as death, he was inclined to think it would be in his favour.

Anyway, he did not intend to propose just yet, only to pave the way for a favourable reception of his advances.

Meanwhile he revelled in my society, doing his utmost to minister to my comfort and wants, and to render himself indispensable to me, so that I once more experienced a pleasurable sensation in having a congenial companion to accompany me in my walks and drives.

Together we explored on foot the lovely

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woods. We extended our driving expeditions far and wide over the beautiful country, where the graceful deer browsed in the extensive parks belonging to the owners of the various charming seats about, and hills and valleys, with rivers flowing through, lay in picturesque variety.

One afternoon turned out very wet. I felt restless, and anxious to exorcise my restlessness by a long ramble; but as Mr. L—— had not brought any change of clothes, not expecting to require them for so short a time, the ceremony of evening dress being dispensed with, I remonstrated against his accompanying me on the present occasion.

Loth to be deprived of my society even for one afternoon, he insisted on being my escort as usual, regardless of the fact that he would have to sit in wet clothes for the rest of the evening.

A bad cold was the penalty of such reckless conduct, which laid the seeds of a more serious illness, although Mr. L——, at the time, apparently quite recovered the consequences of his rashness in a few days. Shortly after the visit of my old friend, having taken apartments, I removed to Dublin for the winter, putting my horses into livery. It felt very

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strange to be again returning to the scene of my matrimonial experiences, agreeable or otherwise, for the first time since last I had lived there with Arthur.

I was reminded at every nook and corner of the city of past events, some happy and others painful, which recalled daily and hourly reminiscences of my brief periods of happiness and longer ones of trouble and sadness.

After all, the trials and worries of my married life dwindled into mere petty grievances in comparison with the hopeless and far greater calamity of death.

Mr. L—— constituted himself my constant *cavaliere servente*. In due course, thinking the time was now ripe enough, he asked me to be his wife.

To me, in spite of my preoccupation and abstraction, whose every thought was concentrated on the memory of the dead, this was not exactly a matter of surprise, or unexpected; nevertheless I was perplexed on finding myself confronted with a decided question, to which it was imperative to give a decided answer. I had regarded the inevitable crisis hazily, as from a distance, conveniently to be deferred to some undefined time in the far future, especially having nourished the delusion that the black

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dresses and crape I continued to wear would act as a deterrent to him, and as a sign that my heart was in my husband's grave. Therefore it would be useless to expect me to entertain the idea of a second marriage, and I tried to soften the refusal it grieved me to the core to be compelled to give to the request of my faithful and true friend as much as possible.

Soften it as I would, the blow, all the heavier for its unexpectedness, staggered poor Mr. L——, who thus found the hopes so long secretly cherished and repressed permanently shattered. Some instinct told him I was not one to alter my decision.

He gave himself up to brooding and fretting, which, to a man of his age and capacity for depth of feeling, was a serious matter. Whether it was that, or the remains of the cold he had caught from his recent wetting at Avondale, or both, symptoms of the fatal disease of consumption began to show, and in six months one of the best and truest friends a woman ever had succumbed to the dreadful malady, vulgarly known as "galloping consumption."

In after years, I had indeed often to acknowledge the truth of what he had once told me, that "I would miss him some day." Never again was I to know what a friend a man can

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be to a woman who loves her genuinely and unselfishly, whose love and friendship are worth a legion of ordinary ones—one who is able and willing to give counsel to, or take action on behalf of the woman he loves, whose body and soul are true to her.

How sad that we so often realise too late the full value of blessings, too lightly appreciated when possessed, and only come to prize them as they deserve when we have lost them.

But so it is, and always will be, whilst human nature is so imperfect, anomalous, and contrary. Dissatisfied with the things we have and which are easily obtained, and ever striving after the difficult and impossible, we can but stumble blindly on through the pitfalls of our brief career on earth, until the day dawns when the light will enter into our souls, when we shall see with eyes that are opened, and understand with the understanding of the enlightened.

The next winter I again moved to Dublin for a few months, having spent the summer at Avondale. Finding life in Dublin, in my widowed condition, productive of more pain than pleasure, I arranged to travel, as in fresh scenes there would be less to remind me of the past; so accompanied by my daughter, two

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horses, and a groom, I started for London, where I felt very lonely.

After a fortnight's stay, I went to stop with a lady living at Richmond. Here I enjoyed the rides in the lovely park, the pretty scenery, and the society of the friend whose guest I was for a month. I next directed my steps towards Jersey, which beautiful little island I liked very much. The inhabitants, too, were social and friendly, and a couple of months passed agreeably. Then I visited Guernsey, intending to make a short stay there on my way home; but the weather became and continued so inclement that, in consequence of the difficulty and risk of getting my horses shipped, I found myself weather-bound in this inhospitable island for a great part of the winter. I did not like Guernsey or its inhabitants, and taking into consideration the reception and unpleasantness I encountered, it was not astonishing. I discovered that one of the most peculiar characteristics of the people of Guernsey was a propensity for rudeness and bad manners, incredible in a people living near the politest nation in Europe. The natives made it their business to acquaint themselves with my history and circumstances. On discovering I was related to the notorious "Agitator,"

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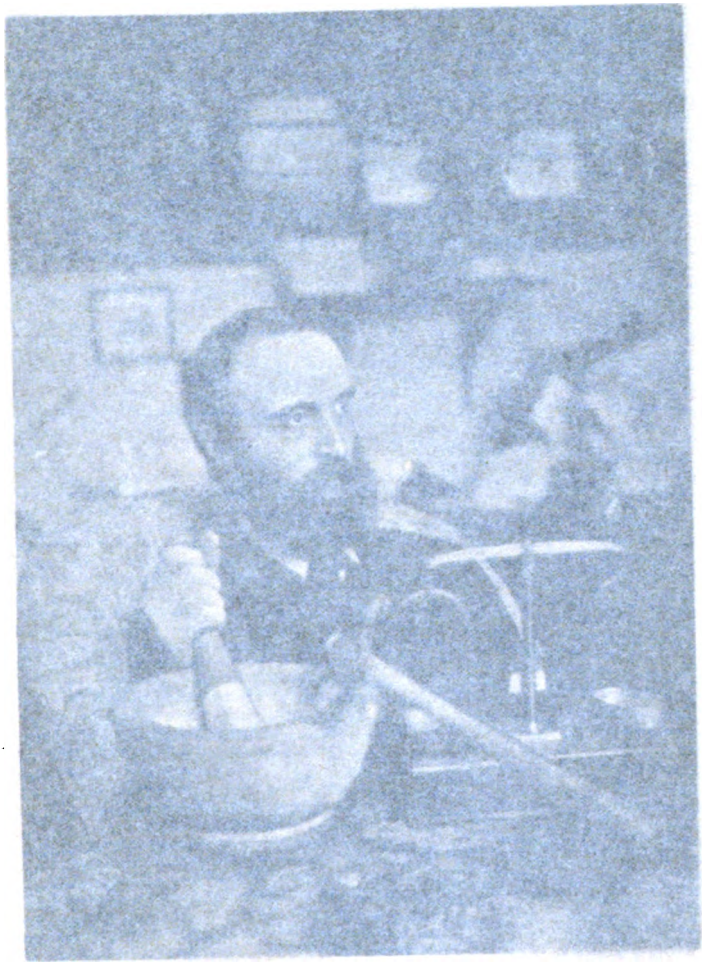

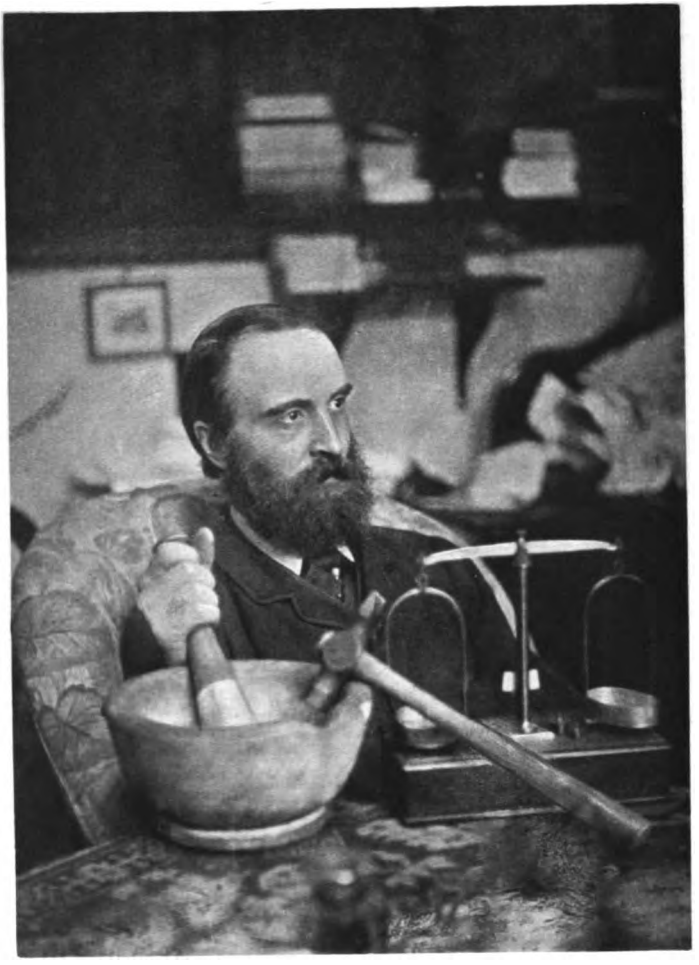

Charles Stewart Parnell
in his Laboratory

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whose politics they condemned, they visited their disapproval and wrath on the head of his unoffending sister. Ladies stared and eye-glassed me with the most insolent air as I rode about the island, and arrived at the conclusion that I must be very disreputable or I would not ride so much.

Anonymous letters from parties unknown were showered on me, bidding me "go back and shoot the landlords, because that was all I was fit for," demanding was "Dublin too hot to hold me," and making various other observations of a similar nature, equally offensive and insulting, all of which, however, I quietly ignored; and the only explanation of these abusive tongues which I could think of was that the women of Guernsey are not particularly attractive.

I continued my daily rides, undeterred by the sneers and gibes that met me on all sides. It was not pleasant, though, and notwithstanding my apparent insensibility I felt it keenly, and hailed with joy the first spell of weather sufficiently calm to permit of my taking my horses across the water, back to Ireland.

On my return I again subsided into permanent residence at Avondale, where there was less to recall to my memory all those

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things that had been legacies of my married life, and once more resumed my former lonely, monotonous existence. After a time I was enlivened by the society of my daughter, whose education being supposed to be finished, came to keep me company.

Delia was now about seventeen, very fair, and bore a striking resemblance to her father, whose disposition she appeared also to have inherited in many ways. She had a rare wealth of fair hair, like the gold dust of Arabia shining through it, reaching below her knees, which seemed too heavy for the head it adorned. She possessed in a remarkable degree that wondrous art, indescribable as electricity, but potent as the powers of the air —fascination!

Endowed with exuberant vitality, she dashed into the old-world silence and solitude of Avondale like a wild wave of the sea. Her incessant chatter and laughter awoke the long-hushed echoes of the ancient house to responsive gaiety, and every lingering shadow of dulness or loneliness fled away from the exhilarating effects of her presence.

Delighted at first with Avondale, with the country, and everything else, she proved a charming acquisition. After a month of rural

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rapture she began to tire of the dulness and sameness inseparable from the still life of the country. She craved for a many-coloured, many-phased existence, and for a wider and gayer sphere of action, wherein to gratify the tastes and capacity for pleasure natural to youth.

I was debarred from gratifying her wishes owing to the heavy loss of income which befell me about this time, through the total failure of my mother's affairs, who, having failed for a large amount through unfortunate speculations in America, now found herself reduced to an almost impoverished condition, and no longer able to continue the liberal allowance she had hitherto made to each of her daughters.

Nor was this the only monetary loss sustained by me, whose resources had already been considerably crippled by the payment of Arthur's debts, so that expense became an essential consideration, and retrenchment a disagreeable necessity. Therefore a prolonged and permanent residence at Avondale was no longer a mere question of choice, but absolutely indispensable.

Delia rebelled openly at the hard lines untoward circumstances had dealt her, complaining of the injustice of fate, which deprived her, at

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the opening of her young life, of the pleasures she had looked forward to enjoying on her emancipation from school, and entailed on her instead the restrictions of a curtailed income.

Her discontent added to my troubles, especially as I could not help feeling my daughter had some ground for her dissatisfaction, and that it was really hard for her to have to forego the joys natural to her age for the want of the needful money. My utter helplessness to meet the difficulty accentuated the hardness of the case.

The years that followed Delia's arrival at Avondale slowly passed, and she grew more reconciled to the dulness of her surroundings. Failing other distractions, she flung herself into a flirtation with a young man, tutor in a neighbouring family, who was quite destitute of private means. The intimacy between them had existed for some months, and developed into an engagement, before it came to my knowledge; but, as soon as I became aware of it, being conscious that the affair must be nipped in the bud, I endeavoured to steel myself to the unpleasant task of thwarting my daughter's young affections. Opposition, however, only serving to strengthen the determination of the lovers to stick to one another, and to marry

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on nothing more substantial than love or fancy, I appealed for assistance to the gentleman in whose house the objectionable suitor lived as tutor to his son. He at once strove to remedy the distress which had been occasioned me by an inmate of his house, and summarily dismissed the offending youth. Absence and separation diminished the ardour of feelings which subsequently proved of an evanescent nature, and afforded the young couple an opportunity of mutually regaining their senses. To Delia it was afterwards a matter of congratulation that she had escaped an impecunious and unequal marriage.

Next winter, profiting by this experience, and fearing the injurious results which a dull and vegetating existence, devoid of suitable companions, would have on a temperament like my daughter's, highly emotional, full of animal spirits, and with a large capacity for enjoyment, I resolved to try and manage to take her to Dublin for a while.

Owing to my long retirement and seclusion, and absence from Dublin, I knew very few people there in comparison to the extensive circle of friends and acquaintances of earlier years. Politics, too, interfered, so social life wore a very different aspect. Cold looks and

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distant bows took the place in many cases of the hearty and friendly cordiality of happier times, therefore invitations were not at all so plentiful as of yore.

Consequently an attempt to renew the conditions of other days proved rather a failure, and Delia, finding the expectations she had formed of the pleasures of society disappointed, sought consolation in a series of flirtations with all sorts and conditions of men. She displayed such recklessness that I was kept in perpetual fear. It resulted in the girl's engaging herself to several men at the same time, from which arose complications both puzzling and annoying. When each in turn found this out, it ended by one and all becoming enraged and breaking their engagements.

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CHAPTER XIII

DEATH

"In the full clutch of circumstance
I have not winced, nor cried aloud."
—W. E. Henley.

The time was now approaching when Charles Stewart Parnell was to reap the bitter fruits of his mistake, and to find that the way of transgressors is hard, and the wages of sin is death.

Nemesis, or retribution, was treading fast on his heels in the shape of Captain O'Shea, who commenced proceedings in the Divorce Court, in which Charles figured as the co-respondent. The action was undefended, and resulted in Captain O'Shea obtaining a dissolution of his marriage.

Probably many remember the intense excitement and the extraordinary sensation caused by the climax, which, though not unexpected by some, was yet a great surprise to the majority. It was fraught with pain to those who had, in spite of appearances so greatly against him, believed in his innocence to the last.

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The papers teemed with the subject, and revelled in the details. It formed the topic of the day, and was in every mouth. Nothing else was talked of. Like the "Yellow Press," the British journals were full of denunciations and gloatings over the weakness of a strong man's life. The abuse and invectives hurled at the former popular leader by vile, defaming tongues, from north and south, east and west, were something unparalleled, as were also the venomous and widely extended hatred and malice evinced by the shower of vindictive epithets that rained from far and near.

With indomitable will and deathless pluck Charles faced the storm and clatter that raged on all sides. He confronted his legion of adversaries with proud and calm defiance, and with grim, unyielding determination. Alone, he stood up against the hundreds and thousands who shed their venom on him, and clamoured to "cast him to the wolves." He bore unflinchingly the altered demeanour and changed attitude of those who had hitherto been, or at least had professed to be, his friends.

Cast off and forsaken by friend and foe alike; unaided and solitary, through months of darkness, hampered by an atmosphere redolent

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of hostile and revengeful feeling he fought his battle single-handed—and such a battle! My heart ached to see him.

Waxing paler and thinner, day by day, as, coerced by priestly influence, each county and town in turn declared against him, the "Uncrowned King" felt himself getting worsted in the fight, and the shadows of a great despair darkening around him.

Still he continued daily to tread the weary tread-mill of a blighted life.

He tried to steel himself against the general gorging and gloating over the scandal, and the ingratitude of a people to whom he had bared his breast and stretched out his hand, but who now rewarded him with a dagger at his heart. There was not one who did not enjoy flinging a missile at him, as, just in sight of the promised land, he was to be refused admittance. He was doomed to see the great structure of his life-work crumbled to dust and scattered to the four winds of heaven.

At the monster meetings, held every week, straining every nerve, with all his heart and soul, and with an almost inspired eloquence, that drew tears from many of his audience, he pleaded his cause, which was also the cause of his country. He looked at last more like a

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dead man standing up to speak than a living mortal.

It was infinite pain to me to watch the vain and futile struggle of my brother against his avowed enemies and treacherous friends. It reminded me horribly of a gladiator in ancient times, who had to fight antagonist after antagonist, until in the end he fell in the arena bleeding and exhausted.

It was at one of these meetings that, watching Charles as he rose to speak, I first saw the shadow of coming death in his face. He wore a rapt, a "caught-up" look.

I had intended spending this winter away, but on Charles declaring he would not stop at Avondale unless I stayed there too, I altered my plans so as to be able to look after his comfort during his weekly visits to Ireland. So it happened that he and I were more thrown together this year, which was destined to be Charles's last on earth, than we had been since the days of our childhood.

I remarked with apprehensive forebodings that Charles never liked to be alone for a single minute, if it could be avoided, during these latter months of his life. He, who had always stood alone and apart—always!

If I left one room for another, he would

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follow me. He invariably maintained in my presence the most cheerful demeanour, would talk and laugh, and make the dry jokes for which he was noted.

One morning he came down first, and was sitting in the library with the door partly open, when, entering the room unperceived, I found him with a look in his face of unutterable despair, of a despondency which saw no ray of light far off in the threatening gloom. In his whole attitude was depicted the melancholy of a man who, in the contest of life, feels that he is beaten.

On perceiving me, however, an instantaneous transformation took place; his face suddenly changed and lighted up, and he made a jesting allusion on my tardy appearance for breakfast.

But I never forgot the look and attitude of dejection with which I had surprised him, when he was off guard, and thought himself alone.

Six months after the termination of the divorce suit, Charles precipitated and sealed his fate by his marriage with the woman who had been the cause of so much disaster, and the avalanche of spiteful maledictions and vile expressions which, having nearly worn itself out,

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was partially subsiding, was renewed with redoubled vigour and energy.

The priests were astonishingly active—in fact, had been so all along; but now, infuriated more than ever by this crowning offence, activity does not describe the zeal they displayed. They ran here and they ran there, intimidating and threatening "all sorts" to those who voted for the transgressor. The threatened bad luck and punishment even included the wives and children, born or unborn, of the men who disobeyed the priestly mandate.

Overwhelmed by defeat after defeat which followed in his wake, Charles's heart was well-nigh broken by the base ingratitude manifested by a country for which he had done and sacrificed so much. Like Cæsar of old, it could be truly said of him that "ingratitude, more strong than traitors' arms, quite vanquished him," and the "iron entered into his soul."

About six weeks after his marriage he came over from Brighton, where he was living, on his usual weekly mission, to speak at a meeting to be held at Cabinteely. I took rooms at Bray, intending with my daughter to accompany him. We drove together in a close carriage, the day being wet.

On the way we passed a house standing in

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its own grounds, where our family had spent a summer shortly after my father's death, when Charles was quite a youth. He observed with interest the different spots which reminded him of familiar scenes of his boyhood, drawing my attention and recalling my memory to this and that incident which had happened in the long ago. This gave me an uneasy feeling of presage, as bearing too great a resemblance to the "babbling of green fields" we so often hear of in connection with people who are about to die, and is supposed to be a sign of approaching death.

Arrived at the place of meeting, the crowd, in their eagerness to shake hands with the renowned Agitator, instead of waiting for the door to be opened, broke the windows of the carriage, and thrust their hands through the broken glass. Always conspicuous for his superstitious tendencies, this could not fail to strike Charles as a sign of evil import. Even to me it appeared at the time ominous of coming misfortune.

As an instance of his superstition I give the following. Prior to entering Parliament he always stopped with Arthur and me when in Dublin, and had arranged to do so as usual pending the contest for Meath (for which he

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was afterwards elected, and which was his first entrance into public life). He had not, however, named a day for coming. One morning, whilst I was dressing, the housemaid came in and asked me if she should get "Master Charles's" room ready. "He hasn't come up from Avondale," I said. "Oh yes, ma'am, he has just passed me on the staircase going down from his room when I was coming up, and he has gone out."

This did not strike me as strange, and supposing he had come by the first train, I told the girl to prepare his room. A few hours later he returned up with his portmanteau, having just arrived by the next train.

I told him the servant had seen him on the staircase early that morning. On hearing this he refused to stop in the house, and went with his portmanteau to my sister's instead.

It continued wet all day, and, regardless of consequences, Charles stood hatless and without an overcoat in a downpour of rain for fully an hour, whilst he spoke with undiminished eloquence and sad pathos. On the break-up of the gathering at an advanced hour in the afternoon, Charles took his niece and me to dine with him at the Royal Marine Hotel at Kingstown.

Having no change of clothes, he sat in his

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wet ones during the meal, seemed to be in very good spirits, and ordered champagne.

Dinner over, he walked to the station with Delia and me, giving the former, who was smoking a cigarette with all the complete mastery of custom, a lesson of astronomy on the way.

It was now fine, and the stars were shining brightly. Putting us in the carriage of a train for Bray, he kissed us both as the train started. He himself was bound for Dublin for the night, whence he was to leave for England in the morning.

I never saw him again.

A cold, the result of his exposure, laid him up, and it was a fortnight before he was able to rise. Even then he was not fit to travel, and it was contrary to his doctor's orders that, rather than disappoint the people, he dragged himself out of bed in order to go over once more to Ireland to fulfil an engagement he had made to attend another meeting.

Without halting, he passed through Dublin, omitting his usual visit to Avondale. Already in a dying condition, alone and uncheered, he travelled the many miles to the appointed place.

Those who heard him speak that day, the

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last time his voice was ever to be heard again in Ireland, never forgot it.

He held them enthralled! — carried away! The vast crowd collected to hear him went into an emotional, hysterical enthusiasm, as, with almost his dying breath, he once more earnestly exhorted them, with all the fervour of his heart, never to abandon the cause for which he and they had worked together, but, come what might, to fight to the bitter end for their country, their homes, and their families. In conclusion he said, "I shall come over to Ireland again this day week." So he did, but not alive. As he ceased to speak, a silence that could be felt fell upon the meeting.

Suddenly the tall, fragile figure, on which the clothes hung so loosely, standing erect, with a mortal pallor on his face, swayed, and clutching wildly at the air, fell—senseless.

The various restoratives applied having proved efficacious in bringing him round from his fainting-fit, Charles feverishly insisted on returning at once to Brighton, and rested not a moment until the return journey was accomplished. On his arrival he was barely able to get into the bed from which he was never again to rise. The long journey to Ireland and

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back in his state had brought on a relapse, which, as all know, proved fatal.

But from the first he had little or no chance. His strength had been too much reduced by the terrible strain of the last ten months to resist even a slight illness, and he was bound to succumb to the first fit of sickness that attacked him.

There is no doubt that in his last illness he was well nursed and cared for. Mrs. O'Shea, now his wife, ministered to him with unceasing devotion, attending to his every want herself, jealous even of the servant who brought his food to the door of his bedroom, where she took it from her, and never leaving him a minute for the few days of life that remained to him.

With his dying breath he sent a message of forgiveness to his fellow-countrymen, who had forsaken him in his direst need, and to those who had hounded him to death. On his death-bed success or failure was the same to him—or rather, failure was of more value then, as he might reasonably expect some compensation for it in the other world.

Like a lightning-flash there came speeding through the telegraph wires the news that startled the world by announcing the death

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of the illustrious Irishman, which fell like an electric shock on the ears of all, friend or foe, and a cry went up through the whole kingdom.

Like wildfire, the news spread far and near all over the world. In cities and towns large groups gathered in corners to discuss the tragic event, and everywhere the most intense excitement and interest prevailed.

Once more, and for the last time, the papers teemed with the name of "Charles Stewart Parnell," all ordinary topics sinking to insignificance by the side of the one that was all-paramount, which for the time being absorbed every one's attention and comment.

On me the sad news fell with terrible suddenness. Receiving a telegram which announced that my brother was very ill, and no hopes entertained of his recovery, I had hurriedly made preparations to go to Brighton, hoping to be in time to find him alive. Long before I reached my destination I knew it was too late, and that Charles was already dead.

Deciding, however, to remain at Brighton for the week pending the funeral, I asked to see his remains, to which very natural request objections were made, and obstacles put in the

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way of the accomplishment of my desire, by the small band of his followers who had stood to him apparently until his death, and had taken possession of his body. This small band in course of time deserted Charles after his burial by joining those who hounded him to death. They might just as well have shaken hands over his grave first as last.

In point of fact, no one was allowed to see him after his death, a sentinel being placed night and day at the door of his room, which was kept locked. In consequence of this secrecy, mysterious reports got about with reference to his death, and many to this day believe him to be alive, like the case of the first Napoleon and other leaders in many lands.

The funeral took place the following Sunday in Dublin. As a public funeral it was one of the most impressive sights ever witnessed.

People in distant countries, with those nearer home, contributed magnificent offerings of floral wreaths, and the funeral carriage, drawn by six horses, was literally covered and overburdened by the abundance of superb flowers sent as a tribute of respect.

Tens of thousands assembled in the streets of Dublin, and stood bareheaded, holding umbrellas

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to protect them from the rain, which poured down, torrent-like in its fury, as the carriage containing the body of the man they had helped to kill slowly passed along.

Everywhere were to be seen strong men with handkerchiefs to their eyes, crying like children.

Except for the sobs audible from the huge mass of human beings which lined the streets, so closely packed that all ordinary traffic was stopped, a breathless silence reigned.

The procession started from the City Hall, where the remains, encased in their coffin of lead and oak, in velvet and gilding, had been lying in state for a couple of hours after the early service in the church at twelve o'clock.

So great was the multitude, and so numerous were the private carriages stationary at each side of the streets all along the entire route, that it was six in the evening before it arrived at Glasnevin. The rain by this time had ceased, and the affecting service for the burial of the dead was again read over one of the greatest Irishmen of the century, who was consigned to earth by moonlight.

The depth of what he, who had always been so quiet, reserved, and inscrutable, though with fine and sensitive feelings, had suffered during

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the last ten months, no one could approximately gauge or define. Grimly he had suffered in silence and alone. No word of complaint had ever been heard to pass his lips.

Impossible sacrifices are never attempted without a struggle, and the struggle sometimes lasts till death. All people who set themselves superhuman tasks are destined to suffer failure—more or less.

To me Charles's death was almost a relief, in comparison to the spectacle of the slow torture he had endured daily from the abandonment and ingratitude of those who had profited by his labours.

Men who undertake such gigantic schemes, eager to take the burdens of the nation on their shoulders, should be made of sterner stuff, both morally and physically.

Poor Charles, hampered by his bad health, though upheld by his great spirit, which was much too big for the body that contained it, was no fit subject to cope with the vulgar onslaught of the common, scheming herd by which he had been encompassed.

It was an unequal fight; and small wonder that, though having the spirit of Horatius, in such a disproportioned and weird fight, which death alone was able to end, Charles got

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trampled underfoot. It was the old struggle of weakness against strength, and in it the weaker fell a victim, and got crushed beneath the heel through the diabolical malignity of his enemies.

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CHAPTER XIV

JOHN

"Fond memory brings the light of other days around me."
—MOORE.

THE scene now changes to Captain Paget's villa on the Thames, to which he and his wife had returned after their lengthened visit to Avondale.

Captain Paget had been in the Royal Navy, and had retired on full pay when still young and rising in his profession. He hated an idle life, and loved the sea, for which he found the Thames a poor substitute, but now filled up his time with horses and cycling, cultivating roses and peacocks. He had married several years before.

Captain and Mrs. Paget's house was one of the loveliest spots on the river, and always attracted the notice and admiration of the river men. The shady lawn was studded with elms and surrounded by rose-trees; the peacocks were to be seen trailing their feathers on it in the sunshine, and it was in summer the favourite

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outdoor drawing-room of the house. Between John Parnell and Captain Paget there had existed a close friendship. The latter had often used strong language over the curious proviso in my father's will that practically made an Esau of John. He, though naturally gentle and the reverse of ambitious, had found it the cruellest blow of his life to be disinherited for no fault of his own. It was this that made him an exile from his native land, though he never cherished the least resentment against his younger brother, Charles. Indeed, few were aware of the kind heart and the strong human sympathy that lay crushed beneath that early act of injustice that so altered his after life. John had a sensitive nature, and he shrank as much as possible from contact with any of those who knew of the slight put upon him by his father.

He rarely corresponded with any of his relations except me during his long absences, and even I had heard nothing of him for more than a year before Charles's death. After it, John was found to be heir-at-law, and Avondale, until his return from America, had no master. Many were the speculations and comments on the causes of his long absence and silence, and the complications threatened by it.

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On this particular morning, in the sunny garden by the Thames, it formed the subject of Captain and Mrs. Paget's conversation. "Theodosia," called out the Captain from the clumps of rose-trees, where he was busily clipping, "I am quite curious to know whether anything has been heard of John. He is not the sort of fellow that is very careful of his life, and maybe has slipped his cable before this. After the way he was treated by his father, I don't wonder at his cutting up rough and starting for America."

"Even though, of course, he has heard of Charles's death," returned Mrs. Paget, a pretty, dark-haired woman, comfortably ensconced in a lounge chair, closing her magazine as she spoke, "I doubt whether he will ever return. The estate will be like a second-hand present now; besides, it's hampered with debts."

"It would be a pity to see the old place left without a master, though I fancy *Irish patriotism* has stripped it rather bare," said the Captain, doing the same to the stem of one of his rose-trees. "One of the most lovable qualities of your enchanting race, Theodosia, is their absolute incapacity to manage money matters. If your pockets are full, you must empty them as fast as possible. They never

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seem so smiling and happy as when in a state of beggary."

"I hope I am an exception," was the reply, "as I feel tolerably happy in spite of having paid my dressmaker's bill, and still possessing a balance at my banker's."

Mrs. Paget added more thoughtfully, "I am anxious about Cora; John's absence puts her in an awkward position. She has no one to take care of her now, and lawyers can influence a woman very easily. A man, who knows something of their 'ways that are dark and tricks that are vain,' is not so easily taken in by them."

After Charles's death his affairs had been found to be in great disorder, the estate having been again mortgaged up to the hilt in order to raise funds to carry on his work. As he had died intestate, the property descended to his brother John as heir-at-law, who was still in America, where he had made and lost several fortunes. No one was able to discover his whereabouts for some months, and everything was thrown a second time into Chancery.

At last, in response to repeated letters and telegrams, John turned up with his mother, whom he had escorted over from New Jersey. He became immediately plunged in a mass of

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business, confronted with difficulty, and engaged with lawyers and the puzzling intricacies of the law. Everywhere confusion worse confounded reigned, and for long no money was forthcoming for any one.

John, only too anxious to carry on his brother's politics and projects, and the family traditions—in fact, as far as he could, to supply Charles's place—found himself woefully restricted through the scarcity of the necessary sinews of war.

Nevertheless, he set bravely to work to maintain a home for his mother, sister, and niece, and we four went to Avondale for the winter. It was a sad home-coming for my poor mother, who had not seen her son Charles for years, and for me, to whom Avondale was so associated with Charles, especially during the last year of his life.

The winter passed sadly enough, but thanks to poor John's praiseworthy efforts there was little diminution of the comforts attached to the ancestral mansion.

Meanwhile solicitors innumerable argued and fought in Dublin, and knocked their heads together in consternation over the almost unprecedented complication and confusion of Charles's affairs, on one point alone unanimous, and that

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was that the estate would have to be sold to meet the liabilities.

Thus the winter slowly changed to spring, and my mother, finding she could get no satisfaction out of the universal bewilderment, returned to America, taking her granddaughter with her, and leaving John monarch of all he surveyed, though with empty pockets, at Avondale. I went to spend the summer at Bray. John had not, however, much leisure to feel his solitude, as the lawyers requisitioned him backwards and forwards constantly, and often he stopped for a few days at Bray.

I had again been plunged into mourning, just when beginning to change it for lighter shades. I spent the summer very quietly, keeping very much to myself. In the meantime my daughter came back from America, and again John, Delia, and I settled down at Avondale for another winter. The lawyers still continued the difficult task of endeavouring to unravel matters and make a possible pathway out of the tangle of monetary difficulties, with, however, only little success. The chief event of importance which distinguished this winter from the last was Delia's marriage—not a particularly good one—to a Mr. O'Clery; but Delia hungered after an active life.

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The monotonous routine of her daily life at Avondale was no food for young blood, and so, in spite of her mother's and friends' remonstrances, she persisted in marrying after a short engagement.

Summer, autumn, and winter succeeded one another with unbroken regularity and monotony, and still the warfare between the solicitors over the hopeless state of things in general connected with the estate waged as fiercely as ever. The only comprehensible fact in the general *mêlée* was that it was exceedingly hard to get any money.

The first Sunday in October after the anniversary of Charles's death was celebrated by a "Memorial Funeral." For some years these pilgrimages to his grave were repetitions of the real funeral itself, the attendance being almost as large as on that occasion.

Later on, however, the attendance began to dwindle. Rumours began to get about more openly that Charles had been seen, by this person and that, in one place and another. The people got the idea that their hero was not dead at all, and that it was only a mock funeral they assembled to commemorate. These annual gatherings sufficed to show that he still

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lived in the memory of his countrymen, who had had time to deplore his loss, and their mistake in allowing themselves to be influenced by the priests, who are always the misleaders of people when they mix in politics, and had expedited his egress from their midst.

In three years after his marriage Mr. O'Clery died, so Delia was now free again. I continued to spend the winters at Avondale, and the summers at Bray.

John was very good to me all these weary years that followed Charles's death, doing his best, on limited means, to supply the place of his late brother; but he, too, was to find that circumstances would be too strong for him. He tried also to keep up the various industries Charles had started in order to give employment, and started two fresh ones of his own.

One new industry, which gave employment to many starving families during the severity of the winters, consisted in having umbrella-handles and walking-sticks made out of the roots of furze bushes, and various articles of furniture, pretty fancy tables, and several other things, out of the remains of the timber cut for firewood, which was found suitable to be utilised. Many visitors used to come to inspect

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these novel and curious specimens of home manufacture.

John, however, unfortunately was incapacitated in every venture by the lack of funds.

At the request of the Nationalists he entered Parliament; but, perhaps, the less said the better, about the scandalous way he was afterwards treated, by the very men who had urged him to this step.

Let it not be supposed, because latterly the subject has not been mentioned, that I had given up my riding, though at times, and for long intervals, I had relinquished it. My horses had always been my greatest pets as well as most faithful friends.

I possessed in a rare degree that gift of sympathy with dumb animals which horses and our domestic pets know and appreciate. The exercise was good both for my health and spirits, and was a considerable aid in enabling me to withstand the trying vicissitudes I had to undergo. Since my favourite Royal's death I rode much less, and had taken more to driving. One reason for this was that, after having been accustomed for so many years to a piece of perfection in horse-flesh like Royal, I found it impossible to replace him.

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About four years after Charles's death, on account of having a powerful black horse called Victor, of fiery temperament and vicious propensities, I took to riding again a great deal. He was a very handsome animal, and liked to show himself off on his hind legs, having a most decided preference to standing and walking on two legs rather than on four.

I had taken a fancy to and bought him some ten years previously, when he was young and green, in spite of, or rather because of, the remonstrances on the part of the dealer[1] who was selling him. This man honestly did not want me to have him, as he was afraid the horse might bring me to grief, and that his, the dealer's, reputation would suffer in consequence.

On the trial drive he had upset the car, driven by his owner, and obstinately refused to do anything the man wanted, whereon I begged to be allowed to drive him myself in my phaeton. To this the dealer consented, stipulating that he should accompany me.

On this occasion Victor, who seemed to know on which side his bread was buttered, behaved like a lamb, doing everything his driver asked

[1] The late Patrick Scully, of Percy Place.

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without making the slightest objection, to the astonishment of his master, who could only shake his head and declare that "the horse knew how to treat a lady."

The opposition of the dealer having the effect of rendering me the more determined to buy the animal, I bought him at the high figure of £100.

"For the love of God, don't ride him, ma'am," implored the man, divided and much exercised in his mind between the good price he was getting and his fear of disastrous results. "There's not a man in my yard will mount him without being first fortified with a stiff tumbler of whisky and water."

"Oh!" I laughed, "I shall not want to use him for the saddle at present, as I am perfectly suited in that respect."

Now, however, feeling in the humour to do something reckless, I substituted the hot and savage Victor to carry me in the place of my lost Royal.

Victor was not so bad as he was depicted. Knowing well it was his mistress who was on his back, he tried to control his passionate temper, and to deport himself like a gentleman.

Occasionally he forgot, and indulged in a few

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frantic bounds and plunges. He also, for the edification of the crowds on band-days at Bray, stood up very high on his hind legs, pawing the air with his front ones, in which position he looked so alarming that ladies, looking on, were terrified. On the whole, the rides were a great success, and I enjoyed them more than I had expected to enjoy riding after Royal's death.

Mrs. O'Clery, whose tastes were quite different to mine, did not care much for horses. She was very fond of yachting and swimming, in which latter art she excelled. She had taken meanwhile to nursing as an outlet for superfluous energy, and was fast becoming a second Florence Nightingale in her ministrations to the sick. For the present she did not seem disposed to avail herself of the liberty afforded by her husband's demise to venture upon a second matrimonial career.

John's face grew graver and longer over the interminable delays of the solicitors, and the despondency engendered by the discovery of having succeeded to a heritage of debt and difficulty. Year succeeded year, and no satisfactory solution of the chaotic state of Charles's affairs seemed any nearer.

More and more, it became evident to all

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that Avondale and its broad acres would have to be brought to the hammer. The sad fact had to be faced that this historic place, for so many generations the home of the Parnells, was now about to pass from their possession.

This was the only reward that patriotism had brought us.

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CHAPTER XV

A CRIME

"Careless their merits or their faults to scan,
Her pity gave ere charity began."
—GOLDSMITH.

I COME now to relate an occurrence that I would willingly pass over, but for its bearing on my story.

My mother had been living many years in America, at her place called Ironsides. Though at an age when most people are content to leave the active business of life to a younger generation, it was still her constant habit to attend personally to all business matters connected with the estate.

This proof of unusual vitality, wonderful in an old lady of eighty, shows the extraordinary vigour and clearness of understanding which characterised this daughter of the great Republic of the West.

One stormy evening in February, with her usual indomitable energy, which never allowed the elements to interfere with any work that had to be done, my mother found it necessary

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to transact estate business in the neighbouring town. Announcing to the household the expected hour of her return, she set off on foot with her bag, accompanied by a dog, who was her constant attendant.

Some effort was made to induce her to postpone her journey, or take some conveyance or an escort, but the will that ruled Ironsides was not easily induced to alter a decision once made.

Having transacted her business, my mother's return journey had nearly come to an end, and she was approaching Ironsides, walking slowly. It was a very sequestered place, surrounded by trees, and the path was lonely, without house or cottage nearer than Ironsides and its offices. On each side was a high bank, topped by a hedge with several gaps.

The mistress of Ironsides sauntered leisurely, watching the sun sink in a golden glow of clouds. On nearing the gate, her dog, with the instinct for supper-time which characterises the doggy tribe, ran on through the grounds. My mother turned to look at a larger gap in the hedge than she had yet noticed, when she was suddenly struck down by a blow from some heavy instrument behind, which felled her to the ground.

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Notwithstanding the awful suddenness of the attack, with her usual pluck she still held her bag firmly, remembering the valuable papers in it.

Fortunately, help arrived soon after she lost consciousness. The would-be murderer proved to be a man who considered he had a grudge against her. Driven by malignant hatred, his efforts to revenge himself had now culminated in this cold-blooded and cruel outrage.

At my mother's advanced age, such a sudden and ferocious attack caused a very serious shock to her system. Indeed, it was at first feared the injuries were fatal. After being carried home in all haste, and doctors and nurses summoned, the extent of the injuries was ascertained. They showed how near the brutal assailant had been to murder.

Meanwhile, my sister Anna had sailed from England in the next boat on hearing of the assault, and her mother's critical condition.

She might have been rightly named "Angel," as she had many of the qualities which we generally associate with that name, and the remarkable unselfishness of her character was, even as a child, shown in many small ways.

Generous to a fault, most of her money was liberally spent on others, and she never

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could bear to witness suffering without trying to relieve it. Ever foremost to help or comfort, she was the first to hasten to her mother.

The depositions of the injured lady were taken, and the perpetrator of the crime identified by her.

Believing herself to be at the point of death, in its shadows she felt the broad charity of her character tinged with a divine glow of forgiveness, and refused sanction to prosecute the wretched man whose own acts had made him her enemy.

However, the innate sense of justice that controls public opinion is not easily silenced, and the case was taken up by my mother's neighbours, with the result that the miserable man was compelled to leave the country for ever, and felt thankful to escape so easily.

It was many long weeks before my mother's wonderful constitution triumphed over the shock it had got. In the end her great vitality triumphed, and she recovered. Though her mind was clear and unimpaired as ever, it was the opinion of all, who noticed how shattered and infirm this cowardly attack had left her, that leniency is sometimes misplaced.

About eighteen months had elapsed since

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the crime, when one summer evening, on the arrival of the train at Kingsbridge, Dublin, the family and a large party had assembled on the platform to greet her, and to show her how deep was the respect inspired by the mother of the late illustrious Irishman, who, like Cornelia, considered her children the fairest jewels she could give for the good of her adopted country.

Even those who can recall similar scenes of greeting after long separation, and the changes that time brings, can hardly realise the sorrow and pain of the spectators when they saw the changed and broken figure again, for the last time, alight on Irish soil.

The enthusiasm and warmth was saddened by something of that depth and tenderness imparted by the knowledge that life and time had left their mark on her indomitable personality, though the brave soul still mastered her physical weakness.

Her life at Avondale now wore the peaceful sunset glow that comes after a long and well-spent life. Its wooded slopes and lawns were the dearest spots in Ireland to her. She felt it a refuge after the hustle and bustle of the New World, and a joy to be with her loved ones again.

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At Christmas the family once more assembled to spend the festive season together.

My mother, since the loss of her money in the deep waters of speculation, had, comparatively to what she had possessed, small means. On inheriting so much, both from her father and her brother, she had voluntarily given up her dower to help Charles in his work for the Irish, a cause she had always had very much at heart. Being so rich, the loss of the few hundreds a year which constituted her dower was no consideration at the time. When the crash of her fortunes came, the despised dower would have been only too acceptable, but was no longer available, having been sunk, with all the rest, in the cause of Ireland.

So, in the decline of life, the grand old lady was menaced with privation. This was happily, however, averted, but all the same she went without certain luxuries, to which her age and her position entitled her. As she had never cared for luxury this did not affect her much; in any case she never complained, but bore all with long-suffering and exemplary patience and fortitude.

A year and a half glided quietly by, bringing little or no diversion to the party at Avondale, except the occasional visits of John, who, when

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his parliamentary duties did not necessitate his presence in London, divided his time between the lawyers in Dublin and the fish and game at Avondale.

My mother's health and strength improved very much under the influence of the peaceful life, happy surroundings, and freedom from the worries to which she had been subjected in America. These were chiefly connected with the management of Ironsides. Also a lawsuit had been instituted against her by an illegitimate relation, who, in spite of his bar-sinister, had yet contested her right to the ownership of the place, which was to him a Naboth's vineyard.

This had lately been decided in my mother's favour.

The old lady spent her time chiefly in writing, reading, and sewing. Unable to walk, except just about the house, she did not go out, as she disliked driving. She sat from early morn until late at night, day after day, indefatigably occupied with either her pen, literature, or needlework. Though in her eighty-fourth year, she was able to thread the smallest needle, and read the smallest print, without glasses. She interested herself, too, in the composition of music, and frequently played the piano for

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hours, her exquisite, fairy-like touch resounding through the rooms like the tinkling of sweet and melodious bells. Always cheerful and hopeful, her sympathy and interest turned readily to all around.

As the other inmates came in daily from their various recreations, bringing with them the freshness and sunshine of the outer world, my mother, with a sweet, pathetic face and bent figure sitting in an arm-chair by the fire, her feet resting on the high, old-fashioned fender, had ever a cheery and pleasant word for each. Her patience and resignation under forced inaction, all the harder to bear for one who had been possessed of the marvellous vitality and energy for which my mother had always been remarkable, was touching. It preached a silent but impressive lesson to the turbulent and discontented spirits of a younger generation, who had yet to learn that peace is better than pleasure, and that contentment with our lot, whatever it may be, is the essential quality requisite for happiness in a world of vanity and change.

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CHAPTER XVI

FIRE

"New sorrow rises as the day returns."
—Dr. Johnson.

A gloom, which seemed to grow deeper with time, had been stealing over the more youthful members of the household of Avondale. In order to relieve it, and money matters having taken a temporary turn for the better, I proposed to give a dinner party, to be followed by a dance. So, after a lengthened interval of depression, everything was topsy-turvy with preparations. The long passages of Avondale echoed with snatches of song, and the hitherto silent house rang with gay voices and lively footsteps, and bustle and cheerful confusion replaced the former chronic silence and quiet.

My mother, to whom it was a memento of her young days, when she was the charming hostess of frequent similar entertainments, interested herself in the arrangements with something like the vivacity and energy of her youth. Feeling, with unerring instinct, that

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Mrs Parnell

(Mother of Charles Stewart)

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this would be the last occasion for the exercise of hospitality which the old house would have whilst still in possession of the family, I determined that nothing should be left undone on my part to render it a worthy addition to the many famous and hospitable functions that had for generations preceded it—one that all partaking of would remember in years to come.

The guests for dinner numbered thirty. The massive sideboard with mirrored back, and the table, around which guests had mustered so often in times gone by, glittered with its display of silver, glass, and an unstinted supply of exquisite flowers, arranged with artistic taste in handsome and rare old china vases, on which the faces of ancestors smiled down from their frames on the walls in grim approbation.

My mother, gowned in a rich, dark-blue velvet dress, trimmed with lace and pearl ornaments, a white lace veil fastened with a comb to the top of her head, and settled over her shoulders, Spanish fashion, sat like a queen at the head of the feast. Never had she looked more charming or so regal. Her appearance that night was long remembered by all who had the privilege of beholding her.

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It was remarked by many present that never had she appeared more clear in her political penetration, or her conversational powers more brilliant.

After the soup had been removed, a remark was made about the outlook in South Africa, then beginning to loom ominously for British interests in that country. The keen ear at the head of the table caught the words, and knowing my mother's pro-Boer sympathies, there was a general look of expectancy among the guests.

"Captain Hugo," she flashed out with her usual candour, "I do not believe your country's prospects there are so certain as you suppose. The British will find they have underrated the Boer strength, as well as their sincerity in the cause. Will your nation ever admit that truth and justice as well as religion are not exclusively of British manufacture? John Bull, in thinking the world was made for the purpose of increasing England's greatness, is too prone to ignore the rights of other nations."

"I admit," returned the astonished Captain, "that we have a good deal of national brag in our composition, but look at what England has done for her colonies as well as for Europe."

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"She has done well for her own aggrandisement, but as for benefiting the world by extending her colonies, every one knows that your most Christian nation goes by the law of 'Might is right.' When there is a question of any extension of territory, the rights of other nations are never considered. What do you consider to be England's motives in the South African question? A chivalrous desire to champion the cause of the oppressed?" she asked ironically.

"Not altogether. We are trying to settle it peaceably; but though we allow a good deal of latitude to colonial Dutchmen, we draw the line somewhere. Besides, if it takes a hundred years, the British nation has a score which must be paid off. Gladstone's blunder and Majuba have always been a bitter memory, and the Boer will suffer for it if our chance comes."

"They fought for their own interests as you for yours," replied my mother. "The truth is that John Bull likes to play the part of universal philanthropist when it pays, and when it results in adding a good slice of some one else's territory to the British dominions. That is why you are called a nation of shopkeepers—the mercantile instinct rules every-

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thing, even politics. But you will see that I am not mistaken. The English do not know the Boers' strength. They are too sure of success, and if it comes to war, will suffer for it."

Captain Hugo laughed. He rather enjoyed political skirmishes with my mother, and they were the best of friends. He turned and made some remark to his next neighbour, whom he had neglected since the dinner commenced, and I made an effort to turn the conversation to lighter subjects.

More guests arrived later to join in the dancing, and the ballroom pattered with the nimble feet of merry couples flying over the smooth oak floor. It was a brilliant scene of light and warmth, pretty faces and slim figures, lovely dresses and flowers, flirtation, mirth, and talk. The ballroom, described before on the occasion of the cricket match, opened into the drawing-room, and the drawing-room into the library. All three were very large rooms. The drawing-room, an octagon room, with bow-windows heavily draped with blue and gold curtains, was adorned with old and valuable paintings, the work of an ancestor of the Parnell family, who was a great genius. The library was considered the most handsome room,

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and to many the greatest object of interest in the house. Its walls were covered with Italian *boiseries* in the antique style. Its shelves were lined with precious books, many hundreds of years old, bound in leather, and valuable manuscripts. Among the books was a valuable fourth folio edition of Shakespeare, which had been in the possession of the family for generations.

While these rooms were furnished in the heavy antique style of oak and mahogany which suited the architecture, the lighter and more modern styles had been here and there introduced with good effects.

The entertainment concluded with an excellent supper, which was duly appreciated, and my mother's health was drunk amidst much speechifying and cheering.

It was late, or rather early in the morning, when the party broke up, and a storm was beginning to rise. Those who returned home in their carriages met with the bitter cold enhanced by a driving mist, and a gradually rising wind.

My mother, unlike the young people of the present day, never of late years breakfasted in bed. She always rose early, and had her breakfast at eight o'clock in her room, sitting by the

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fire in a flannel dressing-gown. The morning following the evening's dissipation was no exception to her general rule, and even the storm, which was now at its height, raging round the house, did not suffice to make her alter her usual habit. I was also up, and arrayed too in a dressing-gown, was in my mother's room. She complained of the intense cold, so I made up a good fire, for precaution putting a fire safety screen in front of the blazing logs. My mother, in her customary garb, with the addition of a warm shawl over her shoulders, sat down in the arm-chair, and placing her feet on the fender, commenced her breakfast. I lingered awhile before going to my own apartment to finish dressing, an indefinable feeling of the shadow of coming desolation causing me to feel reluctant to quit the room; but telling myself it was foolish to yield to nervous fancies, I at length left my mother very comfortably installed, and doing justice to a good breakfast. I then went to my own room close by, to do my hair, intending to return in a few minutes.

Barely ten minutes had elapsed when I heard piercing screams proceeding from my mother's apartment; and rushing back, a sight met my horrified eyes, the remembrance of which will haunt me to my dying day.

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The room seemed blazing at a dozen different points; table and chair covers were burning, and clothes left lying about were having an especial bonfire. My mother, still sitting in her arm-chair, which was on fire, appeared to be enveloped in flames. Her grand-daughter, awakened from sleep by her grandmother's shrieks, in bare feet, and in her night-dress, was kneeling on the floor; her hair, a rippling sheet of gold, falling in sunny waves below her waist. She was clasping with both arms a thick blanket round the writhing form of the terrified old lady. I succeeded, aided by my daughter, in getting my mother, who was paralysed from fright, free from the burning chair and on to a safe corner of the floor. Blankets were then heaped on her, and the flames enveloping her were extinguished. I then rang for assistance. Leaving my daughter still kneeling by her grandmother, trying to calm her agony and pacify her fears, I turned my attention to the fire, which was going ahead, and destroying all before it. It was impossible to quit the room, even for a minute, in search of water, neither could Delia leave my mother, whose screams were awful to hear.

A long billiard cue, which was kept at hand in order to settle the curtains, became useful

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now on which to pick up all the burning débris, which I stuffed into the fireplace and chimney as fast as I could.

Whilst I was thus working with the long pole in my hands, against the flames, the servant came in answer to the bell.

What a lurid sight it was that the opening of the door revealed! In the midst that crackling, dreadful element, with its hot breath against my face. On beholding it the servant threw up her arms and screamed. In a few words I ordered her to send for help and the doctor, and continued stuffing all the flaming fragments I could pick up on the point of the billiard cue into the fireplace.

Nearly driven distraught by my poor mother's screams, which all Delia's attempts at consolation failed to abate, as a last resource I began to pray aloud.

As my voice rose above the noise and din of the roaring chimney inside, and the wild hurly-burly of storm and wind that blew and whistled round the house outside, the words of my simple prayer for help and succour silenced my mother's pitiful cries, bringing peace to her distracted mind and a temporary lull. In a few minutes, and just as I was almost suffocated with the smoke, help came

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in the shape of people who lived near, and who now made themselves of use by fetching water. After an interval several other men arrived, and the remnants of the fire, which the billiard cue had been instrumental in keeping under, were soon finally quenched.

Shortly after my mother had been lifted on to her bed, and soothing remedies applied, the doctor, accompanied by a nurse, made his welcome appearance, and quickly and dexterously dressed the poor sufferer's burns. This gave her great ease—in fact, after that she felt little or no pain.

In the house, so recently threatened with dire and speedy destruction, quietness now reigned, but outside the elements still raged and shrieked, the elms quaked and swayed, and the leafless trees bent their heads beneath the blast. All that day the attention of every one was absorbed in the victim of the burning accident, who, as the night drew on, seemed so well that hopes were entertained of her recovery. She was able to join in the conversation, and even to have one of her usual skirmishes with her grand-daughter, which always ended in making them better friends than ever, but no information with reference to the origin of the fire could be extracted

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from her. In fact, no light was ever thrown on the cause of the catastrophe.

The night passed as such nights do pass, when some one more precious than gold hovers between life and death. The watchers hang over the beloved form in hushed and breathless anxiety and suspense.

The improvement of the previous evening was maintained until about noon of the following day, when a sudden collapse took place, and my mother commenced to sink with great rapidity. She suffered no pain, and was conscious to the last. About five o'clock in the afternoon, like a grand old warrior, happy and peaceful, surrounded by her family and friends, she quietly passed away, without a struggle, into the great silence. One of her friends who was present remarked he had seen many death-beds, but never a happier one.

Beautiful in the lovely serenity of death, the marble figure, with calm, dead face, with its placid expression, shrouded by the snowy sheet, struck every one with admiration and reverence. Many came from a distance for a last look at the distinguished mother of the late Irish leader, ere the coffin hid her for ever from their sight. Inside the house, so lately the scene of festivity, and of such unwonted excitement, all was now

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the dreariest of the dreary. The servant glided about, laying meals which nobody ate, and the great house was full of gloom and silence, for the shadow of death hung upon it. The heavy days went slowly by, and that on which the mortal remains of Mrs. Parnell were to be laid in their last resting-place had come.

Dublin was again the scene of a funeral, which, though intended to be private, assumed the proportions of a public one. Crowds of pedestrians and strings of carriages blocked the streets from the station to Glasnevin. It had been fittingly settled that the mother of Charles Stewart Parnell was to be laid beside her son. As the coffin, strewn with magnificent wreaths, passed on its way, many were the expressions of sympathy to be heard for the tragic ending of one who had been an angel of love and mercy to many a shadowed home, who had never turned a deaf ear to the sufferings of others, but had ever been ready to help and sympathise, to stretch out a hand never empty, all through the years to the close of a long and unselfish life.

So the mother and son, who had had the same great cause at heart, which had for its object the good of their fellow-creatures, reunited in

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death, were left lying side by side. There they rest with the spirits of the departed—

> "Watch like God the rolling hours,
> With larger other eyes than ours
> Do make allowance for us all."

Life falls back into old grooves even after the most stupendous calamities, and my mother's death made but little change in the mechanical routine of Avondale, but in the hearts of her family she was missed and mourned with silent but deep affection.

On me the blow fell the heaviest. My nervous system had received a shock which proved too powerful for all the strength of my understanding to resist, and my unemotional, undemonstrative nature had given way suddenly before the unexpected assault upon my nerves. Now, in my distress, I suffered as none would have believed possible.

A wave of trouble had swept over me, beating me to the earth, closing round like a pall, and leaving desolation and despair behind, and it was all too visible. My supersensitive brain brooded over the manner of my awful bereavement until all my thoughts became warped, and all feeling dead or frozen into a dreadful numbness and torpor.

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When the stupendous phenomenon of death, or some extreme disaster, comes upon the heart, all life is cut in two. Happily there is a limit to the most heart-rending grief, and one becomes dead to all sensation, and indifferent to all surroundings. The bodily health suffers in the fiery furnace of self-torture which a morbid conscience and a sensitive temperament permit. So with me—my mind acted on my body, and a serious illness supervened. The days were a succession of nightmares, all presenting the same dull hopelessness; and, in the solitudes of the night, revived memories of the scene of the terrible fire, and the cruel flames gathering round the stooping, shrunken figure of my poor old mother, penetrated me with an agony which could find no comfort in the knowledge that everything in life is transitory—the sorrows as well as the joys.

Devoured by the demon of unrest, turning in loathing nausea from food or drink, unable to sleep, I paced the room from morning till night, and from night to morning again, brooding ceaselessly over my grief, until thought itself became confused and weakened under this unwonted mental strain.

The doctors called it "nervous prostration," brought on from "shock," and said that it would yield to time; but as the weeks passed

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into months, and the months into years, and I grew worse, they changed their verdict, and practically condemned me to death.

This was a sentence, however, that I had from the first pronounced on myself; moreover, I longed for oblivion in death as only the unhappy can long for it, as the simplest solution to my harrowing memories and tragic experiences; but death is a capricious visitor, and seldom comes to those who court it.

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CHAPTER XVII

PEACE

"The sea—the glorious sea
From side to side
Swinging the grandeur of his foamy strength."
—E. B. Browning.

The current of life was not yet exhausted, and it came back slowly and unwillingly to my aching nerves and starved body, as often happens, when least expected, and I became conscious that life, not death, was my allotted portion. Long after I had given up trying to conquer fate, and had resolved to endure it, my illness, which had for so long baffled all medical science, suddenly took a favourable turn, to the amazement of all.

It was now nearly four years since my mother's death, and the beginning of my illness. The keen edge of torment wore off, and both body and mind grew better together.

A reaction of superabundant energy replaced the apathetic lethargy, the indifference to its own hopelessness; and feeling as though I had stepped from some intolerable state of existence

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into the peace of paradise—in fact, from purgatory into heaven—I surprised every one by my rapid progress towards convalescence. But I had many a fierce tussle with the physical weakness that assailed me, rending me like a lion, and threatening to snap in twain the slender cord of life. For a long time my fate trembled in the balance, and it was many months ere my health was really re-established, and I could feel that the clouds of recent mourning had rolled away for good, and the memory of that distressful time became fainter and fainter. Convalescence was a matter of more than a year. The long-feared worst had now come to pass, and the sale of Avondale had to be confronted. The noble old house, amidst a park and woodland that were the growth of centuries, the fine old hall with its trophies, the deep-set windows commanding such lovely views—all had to go! Strange footsteps would echo in the passages, new horses trample on the gravel walk to the stables. What a place to live and die in was that weather-beaten heritage, with its histories of ages and the troubles and joys of generations written on every ivy-clad stone of its walls.

The day of the sale arrived, and a crowded court awaited in curious expectancy, all eager

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Photo: J. Valentine & Sons, Ltd.

AVONDALE, THE HOME OF CHARLES STEWART PARNELL.

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to know into whose hands the ancestral home of the late Irish leader would fall. The bidding ran high, English bidders and Irish vying with one another, and finally the historical house was knocked down to a wealthy Irishman, willing to pay for the spirit of ancestry that clung to the place. Six months later, the furniture and books were advertised, and the whole country-side knew that all the valuable heirlooms and effects of the Parnell family would be scattered. The family felt it as the final blow to a long series of disastrous misfortunes, and their feelings were heartily shared and more openly displayed by some of the faithful retainers, who had known and loved the house and its owners for more than a generation. The old housekeeper, Mrs. Murphy, as "racy of the soil" as her name, was nearly driven out of her mind with grief and excitement. She had been with the Parnell family since my mother had come, an American bride, to Avondale, and all her ambitions and affections were entwined with the family and the place. Smith, the steward, was the only other relic of the old retainers who had watched the fortunes of the house from the time when Charles succeeded to it.

He was a crabbed but honest Englishman, and a scorner of Irish ways and Irish politics.

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Mrs. Murphy, an ardent Irish patriot and Home Ruler, had many a stormy argument with Smith, who considered himself one of the pillars of the British Constitution, especially sent to Avondale by Providence, to put down rebellion.

On this occasion, however, these former enemies felt drawn together by a common grief, for Smith, in spite of his political feelings, adored all the members of the Parnell family, and had preferred to remain in their service even when offered a chance of settling in England.

On the morning of the auction, Smith, coming round by the stables, was met by Mrs. Murphy with suspiciously red eyes and subdued manner.

"Ah, the darlint old place," she wailed, "did I ever think it would go to pieces like this, and me above the green earth. And what will become of Miss Cora, and Miss Delia, to say nothing of Mr. John? My heart is fit to break to see them nasty auctioneering men fingering of the furniture, that was never meant for the likes of them to touch."

Smith cleared his throat, though he too looked very downcast, and prepared for a speech.

"What have I always told you, ma'am? If people will meddle with politics they will

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soon find themselves with empty pockets, especially when they take the wrong side."

"Do you dare to say," burst out Mrs. Murphy, "that Master Charles's politics (God rest his soul!) were not right? It's myself knows that he gave the very blood of his heart for his country. Didn't I see him raining money again and again to help on the cause, and standing on platforms when he was not fit to be out of his bed?"

"Does that prove that his side was right?" growled Smith. "How can a woman understand politics, or what goes against a man?"

"It was his country he lived and fought for," said Mrs. Murphy, flashing her eyes in wrath, "and this is the end of it. You English, with your cold ways and stinginess, don't know how an Irish patriot can give his gold and his life for the green sod of his country. It's they that were the thrue old stock. If there were more like them, plaze God, we would have Ireland a nation before long."

"And much good would that do you," said Smith, forgetting his dejection in the joys of controversy. "You would all be beggars and bankrupts, and wanting England to help you. Look at this now," pointing to the sloping park and winding avenue. "If the master had

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minded this estate like an English squire, and let the Parliament do without him, it's here he might be yet and the land ours too."

"Yes, and where would the honour and glory be?" was the quick reply. "It's myself that's proud of the way the money was spent. How would the Irish party have done what they did but for him?"

"Honour and glory," muttered Smith, "does it feed people or keep up the land? It's all moonshine and sentiment, and that's what you all live on, and much good may it do you, say I," turning off round the stables as he spoke in a worse temper than ever.

John Parnell had come down for the auction, though it was a bitter trial to him to be present, and he would have preferred to remain away. He was overwhelmed with grief at losing the dear old place, where he had passed many a happy hour on the river with the fish. He loved and reverenced it, honouring its every stone—as all such relics of a chivalrous and gracious past deserve to be loved.

There were things with some deeply-felt associations that he could not bear to allow into strangers' hands, and he had come to bid for them.

One of them was a massive antique sideboard

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associated with early dinner-parties. There was a very large gathering of English and Irish curio-dealers as well as county people. John was not desirous of meeting former friends, and hardly expected their presence. When bidding for the sideboard, however, he found a steady bidder against him, and looked round, thinking he recognised the voice.

He and the rival bidder were mutually surprised at recognising each other's identity. It was Lord Beresford, a former neighbour and friend of the Parnell family, whose estate was near Avondale.

On recognising John, Lord Beresford at once desisted from bidding.

"I need not say, Mr. Parnell," he said, "how deeply all your friends and neighbours feel for you in this trying scene. We will all miss the owner of Avondale."

"Thanks for your sympathy. It's a pretty hard wrench to see one's old home go to the hammer. The purchaser is a rather nice fellow, however, and seems inclined to keep up the traditions of the place."

"Has he got the shooting and fishing as well?" inquired Lord Beresford. "My own coverts are pretty well stocked, but for the sake of old associations I would be glad to rent

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those of Avondale for a time, also the fishing when the season comes."

"He has got both. I should have liked you to have the fishing. The shooting is not worth much now—you know the coverts want stocking; but I always thought the fishing first-rate. I have not whipped the streams for a long time, but Smith was telling me this morning that the fish never seemed in better form or more lively."

"I always considered this the best fishing in the county," said Lord Beresford, smiling as he remembered some of John's exploits with the rod. "Thanks for wishing I could have it. I would have liked nothing better. Now I want you to consider Beresford Court your home whenever you are in this part of the world. We shall be delighted to entertain you."

"You are very good, and I shall certainly avail myself of your kind offer when down here. You know, of course, that my circumstances are greatly altered. I have now to cultivate money-making."

"Why, what are your plans? You will not leave Ireland?"

"Not at present, though there is no way of setting the Thames on fire here. I have got an appointment in Dublin, so must settle there

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for a time. Even Irish people lose their patriotic love of Ireland's capital after some years of America. At least I find it slow and dull after the balmy air of the Southern States. But it is no use complaining. A man must bear his lot."

"I hope that your's will be brighter before long," Lord Beresford said kindly, with a warm clasp of the hand, and the two men separated with mutual regret.

The auction proceeded briskly. The bed, a huge four-poster, in which Charles had been born, went for a fabulous price, and also all the things in his room.

The fame of the books, which had got abroad, had brought connoisseurs from England and elsewhere, and the bidding was fast and keen. The majority fetched a high price.

A few weeks before the auction I had moved to Dublin.

My daughter Delia, meanwhile, had tried some of the gaieties of society, but, like many erratic and non-erratic people, found its cut-and-dried conventions and tame routine of life insupportable. She was a child of nature, and longed for the wild, free life that is not found in cities, nor in society, nor coteries, with their narrow aims and uniform existence. Her friends had long since ceased to be surprised at any

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plan she might propose, or anything adopted to vary the monotony of life. It was therefore with very little surprise, though with some amusement, that they now heard of her intention of going on a visit to some of her father's relations in Australia. Her means admitted of her indulging her taste for travelling, and no objection was offered to her plan.

What might have been expected came to pass. On the same ship, returning to Australia, was a young Englishman named Wright. The fair-haired and captivating Delia made an immediate impression on him, and, having been introduced, they were thrown very much together on the long voyage. It ended in the handsome young Englishman falling desperately in love, and he and Delia were married immediately on landing. The visit to her relations was consequently postponed, and the newly-wedded pair went to Mr. Wright's residence instead. This was a pleasant change for one to whom life had hitherto given more of its realities than of its pleasures.

We will now leave her, hoping that she may find happiness in her second marriage, and that it may prove an ample compensation for the first hasty and short-lived one.

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Dublin, at first, seemed a desert to me on my return there, after an absence of many years, as, with few exceptions, all former friends and acquaintances were either dead or gone away. The few that remained, however, welcomed me back amongst them with warm cordiality, and I found myself much less "shelved" on account of politics than I had expected.

Having now quite recovered from the effects of my long illness, and feeling an exhilaration of spirits in the reaction from worse than death to health and vigour, and a keen sense of pleasure in having got a renewal of life, I exerted myself to make fresh acquaintances. No longer young, I yet looked younger than I was; and my seat on horseback, for which I had ever been remarkable, was as good as of yore. I bought a new pair of handsome, showy black horses, which were respectively christened "King" and "Prince," the latter having been selected as my saddle-horse. In this capacity he deported himself in princely fashion. Sometimes I drove the pair of superb animals, conscious of their pedigree, together in a phaeton, on which occasions their high-stepping action was the admiration of Dublin.

In due course new people called, and I soon

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had more invitations than I was able to accept, and the old sense of enjoyment, to which I had been so long a stranger, began to revive. I returned the kindness and hospitality I had received in the exercise once more of my long unused talent for entertaining. The most interesting of my entertainments was an "American tea," a function which had only been given in Dublin once before, by my mother, in the palmy days of Lord Carlisle. The mysterious and unknown nature of this (in Ireland) rare entertainment excited much curiosity and conjecture amongst my friends. "What is an American tea?" may be asked by the inquisitive. I shall endeavour to give a short description. The reception-rooms were decorated with the stars and stripes, everywhere prominently displayed. Everything American was largely patronised, with the exception of the Yankee drawl, and American free and easy informality of manners prevailed. Even the ladies were allowed the privilege of making speeches on the topical subjects of the day, to which the gentlemen replied, and on this occasion the ladies did more credit to the eloquence of the Irish race than the latter. These were made while supper was in progress.

The famous American drinks were in great

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force, and it might be called a chronic condition of eating and drinking from start to finish, with dancing between whiles. This, however, was more European than American.

The supper was something of a revelation to many of the guests. The long tables were decorated with red and white chrysanthemums, interspersed with maidenhair ferns, and masses of beautiful roses, which had been brought from Covent Garden specially for the occasion.

The supper, in which I tried to satisfy the most fastidious taste, had been supplied by a well-known London caterer, and American dishes had been added to the *ménu*. The company included old acquaintances as well as new, and the occasion proved one of exceptional enjoyment to all present.

After supper the dancing was renewed with redoubled energy, and was kept up to a late hour. In conclusion the band played the British National Anthem, then "God Save Ireland," and lastly, "Yankee Doodle."

Troubles, however, were not yet exhausted. It has already been mentioned that Charles had charged his estate with a settlement on me on the occasion of my marriage. Owing to the death at the most critical time of my faithful

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solicitor,[1] who had attended to my interests with zealous and unremitting care for over twenty years, and had firmly refused to accept any remuneration for his trouble, alleging that he could not take money from the sister of a man for whom he entertained such a profound admiration as he had ever done for my late brother, and being unable through illness to attend to business matters myself, my fortunes went seriously wrong. I suddenly found myself deprived of my jointure. This was also a visible result of patriotism. Of course, it would make a vast difference, as, in consequence of such a loss, I should have the ills of restricted means to contend with.

But the blood of an old and tried race was in my veins. Nothing daunted, I faced the position, and set about ordering my life on other lines.

Deciding to leave Dublin, and abandon my meteoric reappearance in social circles, I wandered off in search of new scenes and faces. After visiting several places, I was held captive by one which especially caught my fancy, and seemed likely to answer the requirements of my altered position.

A lovely spot, its inhabitants simple in their

[1] Mr. Ambrose Plunkett.

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tastes—so simple as to be almost primitive—is this little straggling village, scattered about a tiny bay, shut in by frowning rocks, with a primitive harbour, where fishing-boats lazily drifted at anchor; beyond this lies a great expanse of glittering, sunny sea.

In stormy weather it is wildly, magnificently grand, when the ocean heaves tumultuously, and the wild-fowl fly in screaming circles, and the white horses rise in foam on the dark expanse. On a fine, calm day it is lovely beyond conception, the sun-kissed waves breaking with gentle cadence on the shore, and peace on the shining sea—a silent rebuke to the hurrying strife and unrest in the lives of men.

Even in this remote region, ostentatiously calling itself a bay, cut off from modern civilisation, such as motor-cars and emancipated women, eager interests and warm feelings were aroused, while some links were still retained with the great outside world of men and women. In my daily wanderings over the cliffs I gradually acquired the calm happiness and peace of mind which nature can alone restore to one who has been bruised and buffeted in the conflict with the world.

Here, too, I quickly made friends amongst the kind-hearted and genial people, who received

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me with great kindness, and, taking me on trust, did their best to make me feel at home. One new friend, especially, I was destined to make in this small earthly paradise, Lady ——, a fellow-countrywoman, of a charming and indescribable character, who possessed a strong and fascinating personality—one of those rare individuals of whom it can be truthfully said that "time cannot wither her, or custom stale her infinite variety." Kind and thoughtful for all around her, she fed the hungry, sympathised with the afflicted, and succoured the sick. To me, a stranger and lonely, her kindness and hospitality was as unlimited as it was unparalleled. Indeed, she was nothing if not intensely kind and charitable.

In this small part of the world, far removed from the haunts of men, not yet much known or heard of, I have found a haven of peace after fierce battling with the storms of life, under the sheltering protection of my new friend. In her cheerful companionship I am also consoled and enlivened by occasional visits from Ireland of one true friend, who is as good as she is lovely. Beginning thus to see a good broad stretch of daylight through the entanglements that beset my path, I will wish my readers farewell for the present, being hopeful of the future, in the know-

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ledge that it was never intended that in this life the sky should be wholly and absolutely unclouded, and that there is One who can take the knots out of the web human hands twist and tangle so fearfully.

THE END

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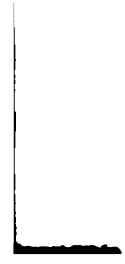
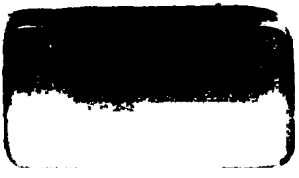
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